

Policy Name:	Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy
Policy Owner:	Corporate & Financial Services – Director of Legislative Services/City Clerk
Approved by:	Council
Effective Date:	December 10, 2012
Date of Last Revision:	May 10, 2023
Review Date:	As Required
Policy Status:	Revision

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework to govern applications for flag raising requests received from the community by the City, and to establish a consistent protocol for the flying of flags at all municipal buildings, properties, and facilities.

Policy Principles:

Richmond Hill recognizes that flags, as symbols of nations, territories and community organizations, are important to residents of the municipality. Richmond Hill is committed to building upon and maintaining the rich heritage of protocol associated with the flying of flags. As a matter of practice, Richmond Hill uses special flag raisings to enhance public awareness of activities such as national holidays, multicultural events, fundraising drives, and historical commemorations important to the residents of Richmond Hill. The municipality will also fly flags at half-mast to mark periods of official mourning or to commemorate solemn occasions important to the residents. The City's flag protocols will be guided by the protocols of the Government of Canada.

Scope:

This Policy applies to Community Flag Raisings held at the Richmond Hill Municipal Offices, and to the flying of flags at any Richmond Hill municipal building, property, or facility.

Definitions:

City of Richmond Hill Flag: Means the flag approved by the Council of the City of Richmond Hill to represent the City of Richmond Hill, any flag representing the City of Richmond Hill approved by the Canadian Heraldic Authority, or other approved celebratory substitute as approved by Council or the City Manager's Office.

City-led Event: Means an event that is planned and delivered by Staff that have a broad community or celebratory focus. Funding for the event comes from the municipal operating budget. A City-led event does not include any event planned by a Member of Council or Staff reporting to a Member of Council.

Clerk: Means the City Clerk appointed by the Council of the Corporation of City of Richmond Hill, or his/her designate.

Community Flagpole <u>Display</u> :	Means <u>the three (3) flagpole display located to the right of the main entrance of the Municipal Offices (to someone facing the entrance).</u>
Flying a Flag at Half-mast:	Means the action of flying all flags, forming a single display of flags, at a position that is equal distance from the top and bottom of a flagpole, to mark periods of mourning or to commemorate solemn occasions.
Mayor:	Means the person who has been elected or appointed as Mayor (Head of Council) of the City of Richmond Hill or the person who is acting in that capacity in accordance with the City of Richmond Hill's Procedure By-law.
Members of Council:	Means a person who has been elected or appointed to an Office on Council, including the Mayor, a Regional & Local Councillor, or a Local Ward Councillor.
<u>Municipal Offices:</u>	<u>Means the City of Richmond Hill offices located at 225 East Beaver Creek Road.</u>
National Flag of Canada:	Means the flag approved by the Parliament of Canada as a national symbol of Canada.
Provincial Flag of Ontario:	Means the flag approved by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as a provincial symbol of Ontario.

Policy Description

1. General Principles

The following general principles will apply in respect to all aspects of this Policy, and be used when interpreting the Policy:

- The municipality will use flags to celebrate Richmond Hill's diversity and honour those who have contributed to the life of the City;
- The flying of flags at any municipal facility will not be contrary to the principles of any other City policy; and,
- National flags of other countries will only be flown if approved or recognized by federal and provincial governments of Canada.

2. Community Flag Raisings

The Community Flagpole Display is designated for the purpose of Community Flag Raisings as outlined in this policy.

Richmond Hill may on occasion, and subject to Staff availability to facilitate the flag raising, permit a Community Flag Raising at another Richmond Hill Facility only if it is connected with a City-led Event being held at that facility and only for the duration of that City-led Event.

3. Community Flag Raising Criteria

The Community Flagpole Display may be used to fly flags significant to the residents of Richmond Hill:

- in honour of national holidays;
- in support of fundraising drives; and
- to celebrate multi-cultural and civic events.

The Community Flagpole Display will not be used to fly flags:

- of Political Parties;
- of Religious Groups;
- in support of fundraising drives that are political or religious in nature; or
- in support of groups, organizations, or events that promote beliefs contrary to any other City policy.

The City Clerk will be responsible for providing advice, as necessary, on the applicability of any of the above criteria to any application received for Community Flag Raisings.

4. General Rules for Community Flag Raisings

The general rules for Community Flag Raisings are as follows:

- i. Flags will be flown for up to one (1) week at a time;
- ii. Approvals and use of the Community Flagpole will be granted on a first come-first served basis; and,
- iii. While the United Nations University - United Nations University - Institute for Water Environment and Health (“UNU-IWEH”) is a tenant of the Municipal Offices, no more than two (2) Community Flag Raising will occur during the same period of time, and no Community Flag will be raised on the flagpole located the left-hand side of the Community Flagpole Display (to someone facing the display).
- iv. When only one (1) Community Flag Raising will occur during a period of time, that flag will be raised on the flagpole on right-hand side of the Community Flagpole Display (to someone facing the display).

- v. When more than one Community Flag Raising occurs on the Community Flagpole Display simultaneously, the precedent for being flown in the customary position of honour will be determined as follows:
- The Community Flagpole in the centre for someone facing the display is the position of honour;
 - The National Flags of other countries will be given higher precedent over non-national flags;
 - Flags of sub-national governments (e.g. provinces, states) will be given precedent over flags of Community Groups; and,
 - Where the flags are of the same level of precedent, the position of honour will be assigned to the application received first by the City Clerk.
- vi. Individuals, groups or associations requesting Community Flag Raisings are required to provide the flag to be raised in advance of the date on which the flag raising will occur.

5. Application Process for Community Flag Raisings

All requests for Community Flag Raisings shall be made on an application form prescribed by the City Clerk and reviewed as part of the approval process.

Requests are to be submitted at least three (3) weeks prior to the day requested for the raising of the flag. If the request is associated with a Proclamation request, this policy shall apply to the community flag raising request only and the City of Richmond Hill Proclamation Policy shall apply to the proclamation request.

All flag raising requests will be reviewed by the Office of the Clerk to determine if they meet the criteria listed in section 3 of this policy ('Community Flag Raising Criteria'). The Clerk will notify requestors if their request does not meet the Community Flag Raising Criteria. Requests that meet the Community Flag Raising Criteria will be forwarded to the Office of the Mayor for approval.

The Office of the Mayor will review and approve flag raising requests, when a flag raising request is approved by the Mayor, the Office of the Mayor will notify applicants of the approved request and copy all Members of Council and the City Clerk.

6. Record of Flag Raising Requests

The Office of the Clerk will maintain a record of all flag raising requests received for at least five (5) years that will include information such as when the request was received, whether the request was granted or denied, the period of the flag raising (day, week, month), and the date approval was granted.

7. Communication

Once a flag raising request has been approved, the following communication will be carried out:

- A letter will be sent from the Office of the Mayor to the organization whose flag raising request is approved with all Members of Council and the City Clerk copied.

- The Office of the Clerk will arrange to include notice of the flag raising on the City's website.

8. Flag Protocol

Richmond Hill's protocol for the flying of flags shall be governed by procedures established under this policy, including:

- Customary Flag Configuration Procedure
- Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure

Scenarios not explicitly accounted for in the procedures will be guided by the Government of Canada flag protocols.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Council is responsible for approving and amending this Policy, and the procedures applicable to this policy.

The City Clerk is responsible for the interpretation and implementation of this Policy. The City Clerk is also responsible for determining if a request for a Community Flag Raising meets the approved Community Flag Raising Criteria, receiving and processing applications for flag raisings for the consideration of the Mayor, notifying appropriate staff at City facilities of Community Flag Raisings and coordinating the raising of flags for the Community Flagpoles. The City Clerk is permitted to make technical and other amendments to this Policy, the Customary Flag Configuration Procedure and the Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure to ensure better alignment with Government of Canada flag protocols, or to address situations pertaining to the tenancy of UNU-IWEH not accounted for within the policy and procedures.

The Mayor is responsible for approving all applications for Community Flag Raisings that meet the Community Flag Raising Criteria as determined by the City Clerk and informing all Members of Council and the City Clerk of any and all such approvals.

Related Documents:

- Proclamation Policy
- Customary Flag Configuration Procedure
- Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure