

March 7, 2019

Ms. Janet Pilon  
Acting City Clerk  
Hamilton City Hall  
71 Main Street West  
Hamilton, Ontario  
L8P 4Y5

Dear Janet;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the current Motion in front of Hamilton City Council regarding the start times of Council Meetings. I monitored the recent debate and took note of some of the concerns and the variety of options discussed. I am pleased to provide Cable 14's feedback below for Council's consideration;

- This fall Cable 14 will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Broadcast Season and since the early beginnings, we have considered our LIVE broadcast coverage of Hamilton City Council Meetings a key programming pillar. I am pleased to inform both you and Council, that that our research and feedback from viewers continues to be reflective of the importance we place on this live broadcast coverage.
- Cable 14 does currently have contractual obligations with regards to other programming content that has, on occasion, required us to preempt live coverage of Council Meetings on Cable 14. In those situations, we have distributed live coverage of City Council on our online product, Cable 14 Now. With the City's recent implementation of live streaming on YouTube, it is our intention not to continue to distribute live coverage on Cable 14 Now if conflicts arise in the future. We will, however, continue to provide tape-delayed coverage on Cable 14 when possible.
- Cable 14 currently produces our CITY MATTERS newsmagazine program live from Monday to Thursday at 4:00 pm. In the past, Councilors have appeared on the program to discuss important City issues and this content dovetails nicely into our live coverage of Council Meetings on those Wednesday nights when Council meets at 5:00 pm.
- Cable 14 **would not** be supportive of the option of moving Council Meetings back to 7:00 pm. We feel that this would cause the highest number of potential conflicts with our other programming content and would result in the highest number of preemptions of live coverage of Council Meetings.
- Maintaining the current 5:00 pm start time provides Cable 14 with the opportunity to include a preview of the issues in front of City Council that evening on our City Matters program. However, when Council Meetings last longer than 2 hours, we encroach into the broadcast window of other programming obligations. In the past, we have made the decision that if we anticipate Council will run longer than 2 hours, we will not broadcast the meeting live if we have a 7:00 pm commitment as we do not want to discontinue coverage once it has started. Therefore, we are of the opinion that a 5:00 pm start time provides the second highest opportunity for scheduling conflicts with other programming commitments.

- Cable 14 would be most supportive of moving the start time to 9:30 am as contemplated by the current Motion in front of Council. With a 9:30 am start time, Cable 14 currently can commit to live coverage of Council on Wednesday's at 9:30 am supplemented with a same-day repeat at 9:00 pm. This would provide our viewers with both the live viewing opportunity and a primetime viewing opportunity on the same day. Another benefit of a daytime Council Meeting is that our City Matters program can provide timely reaction and comment at 4:00 pm bridging the gap between the live coverage of Council and the primetime replay later that same evening. It is important to note, however, that **any** programming is subject to preemption at **any** time and based on any number of factors as determined by Cable 14. It is our current opinion however that a 9:30 am meeting would provide the least number of potential conflicts in scheduling, allowing us to deliver a consistent offering to viewers.
- Given that Council currently meets during the day and only once per month in July and August, and it is anticipated that this change if implemented would not come back to Council until April, we would request that any change in the start time become effective in September of 2019 so that we can include any change in our fall programming schedule.

Cable 14 considers itself to be a strategic partner with the City of Hamilton in broadcasting City Council Meetings live to city residents. We have worked closely with you and others on the development and implementation of the new broadcast hardware. Certainly, the outcome of that project has not resulted in the high-quality of broadcast signal that we, or our viewers were expecting. However, the current system is certainly an improvement on the analog, standard-definition signal. We are always interested and available to work with the City on improving the operations of the new system, including the addition of closed-captioning for the hearing impaired. It is our opinion that closed-captioning these important broadcasts are imperative to improving accessibility for all resident of the City of Hamilton.

No matter what the outcome of the scheduling decision made by Council, Cable 14 intends to continue our half-century tradition of broadcasting live coverage of Council Meetings to our viewers. The opportunity currently being discussed to move the start time to 9:30 am provides the best chance of limiting the number of potential preemptions.

We realize that there are many considerations regarding this potential change, and we welcome the opportunity to place our comments in front of Council as part of their overall deliberations. Cable 14 strongly reinforces to you our opinion, and that of our viewers, that our live broadcasts are vitally important.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. As always, we would welcome the opportunity and are ready to discuss any of these matters with you. If you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me directly.

Warm Regards,



Wm. J. Custers  
Manager, Broadcast Operations  
TV Hamilton Limited