



CITY OF HAMILTON
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
Digital Innovation & Strategic Partnerships
and
Communications & Strategic Initiatives

TO:	Mayor and Members Governance Review Sub-Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	October 27, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	City of Hamilton Flag and Sign Policy (CM23014) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Cyrus Tehrani Chief Digital Officer & Director of Innovation City Manager's Office
SIGNATURE:	
SUBMITTED BY:	Matthew Grant Director of Communications & Strategic Initiatives City Manager's Office
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- a) That the City of Hamilton's Flag Protocol (Report 11-003 to Governance Review Sub-Committee) be repealed and replaced with the City of Hamilton Flag and Sign Policy in Appendix A to Report CM23014;
- b) That the City of Hamilton Flag and Sign Policy be posted on the City website to guide the raising and lowering of flags and lighting of the 3D Hamilton sign, and;
- c) That the City of Hamilton Flag and Sign Policy be brought forward for amendment at such time that the City adopts an official days of recognition policy.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The City of Hamilton's current Flag Protocol was approved at the Governance Review Sub-Committee in 2011. This protocol, respecting national flag etiquette, outlines the types of flags flown, how they should be flown, and when they should be flown at half-staff to recognize a day of significance to the community. In addition, the City accepts community requests to raise flags at City Hall to recognize days and months of significance to the community.

In 2018, the City unveiled the 3D Hamilton sign in the forecourt of City Hall. There is no Council-approved policy that outlines the sign lighting criteria, however the administration of the community requests to light the sign have been completed in the spirit of the flag protocol since unveiling.

To enhance the delivery of this program, a proposed policy has been drafted, included in Appendix "A" to Report CM23014, and a proposed commemorative schedule is included in Appendix "B" to Report CM23014.

The proposed approach seeks to create a simple framework for commemorating days and months of significance. The City would recognize a minimum calendar of dates as defined by Provincial and Federal proclamation and legislation, with the continued opportunity for community groups to seek recognition via requests.

In order to ensure transparency and equitability to the request process, the evaluative criteria for both the flag and sign would be available to the public via the City website, and staff would only deny requests if they did not meet the criteria outlined in the policy.

The Policy outlines the requirements of the request including:

- Is made on behalf of a local, provincial, national, or international organization
- Does not contravene any City policy
- Does not duplicate an existing request
- Supportive of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility and does not promote hate
- Does not promote a specific religious denomination or sect
- Is not political in nature
- Does not promote commercial interests
- Does not reflect personal occasions (i.e., an individual's birthday)
- Takes place no more than once a year
- Aligns with the Global Affairs Canada list of national days

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Updates to the duration of flag and sign requests are included in the policy to acknowledge operational limitations and ensure equitable access to all requesters. This includes a maximum flag request of two business days, except for major commemorative events as defined by the City, and a single night for the lighting of the sign.

It is recommended that this policy, as well as the annual calendar, be posted on the City website to provide transparency around community requests and the commemorative activities to expect from the City.

Alternatives for Consideration

N/A

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: N/A

Staffing: Approving this updated policy would improve clarity for staff and the administration of the flag and sign program.

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The City of Hamilton's current Flag Protocol was approved at the Governance Review Sub-Committee in 2011 – Report 11-003 – and respects national flag etiquette. Flag raisings have been occurring at City Hall for several decades.

Of particular interest to the community are the flag poles on the parapet of City Hall. There are thirteen flag poles, eight of which fly permanent flags such as the Canadian, Ontarian, Hamiltonian, Francophone, and local Indigenous flags. There are five courtesy poles that are available for temporary flags such as the current Ukrainian flag, and flags for visiting dignitaries, including community flag requests.

There is no Council-approved policy governing the 3D Hamilton sign.

In late 2022, the Mayor's office delegated the administration of these two programs to the City Manager's Office.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

If Council were to approve the recommendations in this report, the Flag Protocol in Report 11-003 would be repealed, and the policy in Appendix A would replace it.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

In preparing the policy before Sub-Committee, staff have consulted with those involved in administering it – the Facilities team, Communications, the Community Engagement team, and the Mayor’s Office. Community members making flag or sign requests were also asked informally about the process. Key consultation was with the Community Engagement team to help define the days and months of significance to the community, including equity-deserving groups.

Other jurisdictions were also consulted. The Cities of Burlington and Toronto were engaged verbally, and staff reviewed available policies for the City of Ottawa, City of Vancouver, City of Calgary and City of Toronto. Provincial, Federal, and international days and months of significance calendars were reviewed as inputs into the proposed approach.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report CM23014 – City of Hamilton Draft Flag and Sign Policy – clean version

Appendix “B” to Report CM23014 – City of Hamilton Draft Flag and Sign Policy – tracked version

Appendix “C” to Report CM23014 – Proposed Flag & Sign Recognition Calendar