

Committee Report - Clerk
Tuesday, September 03, 2019

Subject: Establishment of a Flag Policy

Recommendation:

THAT Committee receive Report 2019-0008-Clerks – Establishment of a Flag Policy; and

THAT Committee recommend that Council approve the following recommendations:

THAT Staff be directed to include the purchase of two additional flag poles for installation at the Town of Pelham Municipal Building, 20 Pelham Town Square in the 2020 Facilities Budget; and

THAT, if budget approval is obtained, the third ranking flag pole be designated as the Community Flag Pole; and

THAT the Flag Policy as appended to this report be recommended to Council for approval; and

THAT Policy CLERK14, Flag Lowering at Municipal Building be repealed and replaced; and

THAT flag raising requests be suspended until such time as the community flag pole is in place.

From the Clerk's Department



**Administration
Services**

Background:

The Town of Pelham periodically receives requests to raise a community flag for various events, proclamations, commemorations, etc. Further, the Town has historically lowered flags to the half-staff position as a sign of respect and community mourning, or to commemorate specific dates. Establishment of a policy for the raising of community flags, and half-staffing of flags at municipal facilities during periods of mourning will ensure a fair and consistent approach to such requests. Furthermore, flag raising policies are both standard and a best practice in municipal operations.

The Town has consistently flown various community flags to recognize, such causes and community groups as Seniors' Month, United Way Campaigns, Pride Week, as well as in support of issue-specific proclamations. Because the municipal building is host to only one single flag pole, this results in the National Flag (Maple Leaf) being replaced at certain times during the year. The Town constantly maintains a Maple Leaf over the Veterans' Memorial in Peace Park.

Under the guidelines contained on the Heritage Canada webpage, <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/flag-canada-etiquette/flying-rules.html#a22> the National Flag should not be subjected to dishonor or displayed in a position inferior to any other flag and should always be flown on its own mast or flag pole. It is improper to fly two or more flags on the same mast or flag pole, i.e. one beneath the other.

As such, in order to accommodate flag raising requests and in the absence of a formal policy, the Town has been in the practice of removing the National Flag from the front of Town Hall and flying a community flag for a period of no longer than one week in its place, while always ensuring the flag over the Veterans' Memorial remains. Although the number of flag raising events has not been significant in the past, i.e. 3-4 per year, there is the potential for an increase in requests which could result in the National Flag being replaced by a community flag more often. To ensure that the Maple Leaf continues to be flown in front of Town Hall consistently, while simultaneously allowing the Town to support the community requests, it is recommended that Council approve the purchase of two additional flag poles for installation at 20 Pelham Town Square in front of the municipal building and to adopt a flag policy to govern the raising of community flags and setting out half-staff protocols.

There are specific protocols required when there is more than one flag pole installed, as outlined below.

The National Flag of Canada (Maple Leaf): The official ceremony to inaugurate the current Canadian Flag was held in Ottawa, on Parliament Hill, February 15, 1965. When sharing the same base where three flags are displayed, the National Flag of Canada should be at the centre. To the observer facing the flag display, the second-ranking flag is placed to the left of centre and the other to the right.

The Province of Ontario Flag: The flag was first raised on May 21, 1965 in front of the Legislative Assembly building, Queen's Park, being the day it was proclaimed into force. In a three-flag series, this flag would be flown on the flag pole to the left of the National Flag, as described above.

The Town of Pelham Municipal Flag: The Town of Pelham flag bears the official Coat of Arms, granted on January 10, 1979. In the three-flag series noted above, this flag would fly to the right of the National Flag and this third pole would be utilized as the community flag pole, wherein the Municipal Flag would be interchanged with the community flag in accordance with an approved Flag Policy. As outlined in the proposed policy, flags flown by special request would replace the Municipal Flag for the duration the of the request, to a maximum of one week.

Analysis:

While it is recognized that charitable or non-profit organizations may use a flag raising event to increase public awareness of their programs and activities, it is also important to recognize and honour the importance of the Maple Leaf remaining visible in front of the Town Hall. In order for the Town of Pelham to continue to build a strong community and align policy with the values of Caring and Respect as included in the Town's Strategic Plan, specific protocols are recommended as they relate to flag raising, similar to those adopted through the Proclamations Policy.

The proposed policy also includes provisions for flying flags in the half-staff position as an expression of a collective community sense of sorrow, which will also be implemented in a consistent and appropriate manner.

The policy includes a component relating to communication on the Town's website to describe the purpose of the community flag, half-staff positioning and the expected duration in either circumstance.

Financial Considerations:

Cost implications relate to the purchase of two additional flag poles in front of Town Hall, 20 Pelham Town Square, estimated at \$6,017.25 total, to supply and erect. A concrete base would be built by Public Works staff. Because this item was not

contemplated and thus budgeted for 2019, it is recommended for consideration during the 2020 budget deliberations.

Alternatives Reviewed:

Council could direct staff to prepare a policy that does not permit raising of any community flags representing organizations, events or causes to be displayed on municipal property and continue with a single flag pole displaying the National Flag only.

Alternatively, Council could direct staff to continue with past practice of occasionally replacing the National Flag in front of Town Hall with a community flag. This approach is not recommended.

Finally, Council could authorize the purchase of two flag poles in 2019.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Build Strong Communities and Cultural Assets

Community flag raisings are seen as a celebration of a community's cultural diversity and inclusivity while increasing awareness of special occasions, initiatives and activities. Through the addition of two additional flag poles in front of Town Hall, the National Flag will remain permanent and prominent while providing the ability to incorporate a community flag.

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

Proclamations Policy, appended.

Proposed Flag Policy and associated Community Flag Pole Request Form

Consultation:

Referenced Flag Policies and Protocols from Across Ontario; Heritage Canada website. Members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Deputy Treasurer.

Legal Consultation, If Applicable:

Not Applicable

Prepared and Recommended by:

Nancy J. Bozzato, Town Clerk

Approved and Submitted by:

David Cribbs, Chief Administrative Officer

