

NEWS RELEASE

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City Addresses Decorum During Council Meetings

New guidelines expected to lead to more respectful, productive meetings

Council, the Chair, CAO and City Clerk each have roles and responsibilities at public meetings. Specifically, the Mayor, as Chair, has the authority and duty to take all measures necessary to Chair meetings that comply with provincial laws and workplace laws. "What is important to understand that Council meetings are open to the public and are both a political/democratic forum and a workplace" remarks Tracy Samra, City Manager.

Sheila Gurrie, City Clerk explains "My role is to ensure that accurate minutes of the meetings of council are prepared and that these records, and all corporate records, are maintained and kept safe; as well, to provide Council and the Chair with parliamentary procedures and advice."

The Chair is the most powerful person in the room, as a result, City staff rely on the Chair to maintain decorum and compliance with workplace laws. Council has endorsed a revised Council Meeting Decorum Statement that builds on their adoption of a Council-City Staff Protocol in September 2017 (copy attached to online version of this news release). At the beginning of each meeting the Chair will read it out. When decorum is lost and the Chair does not or cannot restore appropriate behaviour within the Council Chambers, City staff are authorized to take steps – like provide immediate parliamentary advice or excuse themselves from the meeting.

The City is not required to video record, broadcast or live-stream Council meetings. In other words, neither the Community Charter nor the Procedure Bylaw obligate the City to electronically record meetings. "The decision to broadcast or live-stream a Council meeting is a political decision and we will take our direction from Council" remarks the City Clerk. The City has not redacted any video with the exception of a redaction in 2014 that was overturned by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner – in 2016 the City Clerk restored the missing video and reposted.

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