

The Corporation of the City of Cornwall
Regular Meeting of Council
Report

Department: Corporate Services
Division: Clerk's Division
Report Number: 2020-377-Corporate Services
Prepared By: Manon Levesque, City Clerk
Meeting Date: November 23, 2020
Subject: Town Hall Meetings Policy

Purpose

To present members of Council with a draft Policy on Town Hall Meetings.

Recommendation

That Council approve the Town Hall Meetings Policy.

Background / Discussion

On July 20, 2020, Council held a Special Meeting to update and revise the Procedural By-law. On August 10, 2020, Council approved the final version of the Procedural By-law, as amended, as By-law 2020-103.

As part of the review, Council voted to implement Town Hall Meetings.

On November 23, 2020, Council was presented with a draft Policy on Town Hall Meetings at which time discussions were held about specific points in the said Policy.

The following addresses those specific points:

1. **Clause 3 e)** Meetings will be broken down in two sections. The first section will be comprised of current subjects on which members of Council would like to get public feedback. The second section will be comprised of subject matters the public would like to speak about.

Administration is recommending that the Town Hall Meetings be broken down in two sections. The first section would be comprised of current subjects on which members of Council would like to get public feedback. This idea stemmed from a discussion held by Council at its Regular Meeting of Council of September 28, 2020, when the Electoral System Review was referred to a future Town Hall Meeting.

The second section be part of the Town Hall Meeting where residents can bring ideas to Council. Residents would register their questions, comments, concerns, feedback, or proposals in advance in order to formulate the Agenda for the said Meetings.

Administration is recommending this clause not be changed.

2. **Clause 4 e)** Closing remarks by Members of Council

After hearing comments from Council, Administration is recommending that this clause be removed in its entirety. Members of Council will make their comments when individual residents speak.

3. **Clause 5 a)** Every member of Council shall conduct themselves with decorum and professionalism at all Town Hall Meetings in accordance with the provisions of the Procedural By-law, the Code of Conduct, and other applicable law.

This clause was copied directly from the Code of Conduct, Clause 7.0, page 5.

Administration recommends leaving this clause in this Policy.

4. **Clause 5 c)** In order to promote respect, members of Council and of the public shall listen to the ideas of each other without judgment, seek to understand the unique challenges to each other's viewpoints, provide constructive feedback when necessary, and encourage a collaborative relationship based on trust, kindness, and respect for individual perspectives.

This Clause includes the same standard of decorum for members of Council and member of the public.

Administration recommends leaving this clause in the Policy.

5. **Clause 5 h)** Speakers are limited to five (5) minutes.

After hearing comments from Council, Administration is recommending changing the limit to speak to three (3) minutes.

6. **Clause 5 k)** Members of Council may discuss Municipal issues but may not advance Municipal business. A Councillor may take an item to a Regular Committee of the Whole meeting under New Business or Notice of Motion at a Regular Meeting of Council as per the Municipal Procedural By-law.

Members of Council may discuss issues at a Town Hall Meeting but cannot make decisions, cannot not advancing Municipal business and cannot make motions. A Town Hall Meeting is a forum where members of the public have an opportunity to raise issues to members of Council. If there is a specific issue that Council wishes to deal with, a member of Council must introduce it at a Regular Meeting of Council to be dealt with.

Administration recommends leaving this clause in the Policy.

7. **Clause 5 m)** Members of Administration may attend the Town Hall Meetings, however, will not be permitted to participate.

After hearing comments from Council, Administration is recommending changing "Members of Administration may attend" to "Members of Administration are encouraged to attend".

8. **Electronic Meetings**

Town Hall Meetings will follow the same procedures as Council Meetings during a local state of emergency.

Administration is proposing adding the following clause to this Policy.

Electronic participation - emergencies

Members of Council may participate electronically during any period where an emergency has been declared to exist in all or part of the municipality pursuant to the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

This draft Policy on Town Hall Meetings is being presented to Council for review:



The Corporation of the City of Cornwall Town Hall Meetings Policy

Department: Corporate Services – Clerk's Division

Effective Date:

Council Approval:

1. Policy Statement

The Council of the Corporation of the City of Cornwall has identified community consultation and participation as key priorities. Town Hall Meetings have been implemented to allow an open dialogue between residents and Council for a free exchange of ideas and information in an informal atmosphere.

2. Purpose

Town Hall meetings are to be based on a Question and Answer format with all members of the public welcome to pose questions and provide comments to Members of Council. However, all participants (Member of Council and the public) are expected to adhere to the meeting guidelines at all times.

3. Meetings

- a) Meetings may be held on dates designated by Council.
- b) The location may alternate between community facilities within the City of Cornwall.
- c) Members of Council may participate electronically during any period where an emergency has been declared to exist in all or part of the municipality pursuant to the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

- d) Meetings are to take place between 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. or as designated by the Chair.
- e) Meetings are to be chaired by the Mayor or designate.
- f) Meetings will be broken down in two sections. The first section will be comprised of current subjects on which members of Council would like to get public feedback. The second section will be comprised of subject matters the public would like to speak about.
- g) For the first section, where Council is looking for feedback, members of the public need not register but can attend and raise their hand to be recognized.
- h) For the second section, those wishing to address Council on a specific matter, must register to be added to the Agenda and must submit their questions, comments, concerns, feedback, or proposals to the City Clerk no later than 4:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the upcoming Town Hall Meeting.

4. Meeting Format

- a) Chair opens meeting with introductory remarks
- b) Introduction of Council Members in attendance
- c) Review of Town Hall Meeting Guidelines
- d) Open floor to questions, comments, concerns, feedback, and proposals from the public
- e) Closing remarks by Chair
- f) Adjournment

5. Town Hall Meeting Guidelines

- a) Every member of Council shall conduct themselves with decorum and professionalism at all Town Hall Meetings in accordance with the provisions of the Procedural By-law, the Code of Conduct, and other applicable law.
- b) Members of Council and of the public shall foster a climate of mutual respect.

- c) In order to promote respect, members of Council and of the public shall listen to the ideas of each other without judgment, seek to understand the unique challenges to each other's viewpoints, provide constructive feedback when necessary, and encourage a collaborative relationship based on trust, kindness, and respect for individual perspectives.
- d) Town Hall Meetings are not a statutory requirement of Council. They are offered as an added opportunity for dialogue with the community grounded in the principles of transparency, responsiveness, participation, and collaboration.
- e) Breach of decorum may result in the microphones being turned off and/or the participant being asked to leave the meeting.
- f) All questions and comments are to be directed through the Chair and then to each member of Council for comment as appropriate.
- g) The Chair will designate who has the floor. Participants are asked not to interrupt or distract a speaker. The Chair may interrupt only to raise a point of order.
- h) Speakers are limited to three (3) minutes.
- i) Members of the public are limited to speak once on each subject.
- j) While members of the public may speak on any subject, Council cannot discuss items that reflect an identifiable individual, solicitor-client communications, or any other item dealt with under the open meeting exceptions as per the Municipal Act, 2001.
- k) Members of Council may discuss Municipal issues but may not advance Municipal business. A Councillor may take an item to a Regular Committee of the Whole meeting under New Business or Notice of Motion at a Regular Meeting of Council as per the Municipal Procedural By-law.
- l) Members of Council will make every effort to respond to all questions and comments. Where a Council member does not have all the relevant information at hand, information may be provided to the member of the public after the meeting or brought forward through the Committee of the Whole process.
- m) Members of Administration are encouraged to attend the Town Hall Meetings, however, will not be permitted to participate.
- n) The Chair is responsible to ensure all participants comply with the Meeting Guidelines.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Town Hall Meetings Policy - 2020-377-Corporate Services.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Dec 9, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Manon L. Levesque - Dec 9, 2020 - 10:27 AM

Geoffrey Clarke - Dec 9, 2020 - 11:11 AM

Maureen Adams - Dec 9, 2020 - 2:18 PM