

Date: February 19, 2021

To: Chair and Members of General Committee

From: Gary Kent, CPA, CGA, ICD.D, Commissioner of
Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer

Originator's files:

Meeting date:
March 31, 2021

Subject

Updates to the Community Recognition Policy

Recommendation

1. That the Corporate Report dated February 19, 2021 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services entitled "Updates to the Community Recognition Policy" be received.
2. That Council approve that the City of Mississauga continue to offer community flag raising with an updated request process for national flags within the Community Recognition program and as outlined in this Corporate Report.
3. That the updated Corporate Policy – Community Recognition Program, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.
4. That the updated Corporate Policy – Flag Protocol at City Facilities, attached as Appendix 2 to this report, be approved.

Report Highlights

- The Community Recognition Program is intended to raise awareness and encourage participation in fundraising initiatives, public awareness campaigns, cultural, sport and entertainment programs as well as activities that foster a spirit of community and contribute to enriching the quality of life in Mississauga.
- The Community Recognition corporate policy was formally introduced in 2017 and includes criteria for Civic Centre clock tower lightings and flag raisings.
- In reviewing the policy, staff reviewed best practices from other municipalities and sought feedback on this topic from Members of Council and the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee on February 10, 2021.
- Staff are recommending one change to the national flag raising component requiring an updated request process whereby community groups submit their requests in the fall of the preceding year. Additional policy changes are being incorporated to streamline the administrative process for requests.
- Following Council's approval, staff will make the necessary amendments to the Community Recognition policy.
- The draft policy has been circulated to all directors and no concerns were identified.

Background

The Community Recognition Program is intended to raise awareness and encourage participation in fundraising initiatives, public awareness campaigns, cultural, sport and entertainment programs as well as activities that foster a spirit of community and contribute to enriching the quality of life in Mississauga.

In May 2015, the City of Mississauga began informally executing recognition activities based on requests received from various community groups.

The program began with only 16 requests for either proclamations or clock tower lightings over the course of six months. As the number of requests began to increase in early 2016, staff was directed to create a draft Community Recognition program and share it with the City's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DIAC) for input.

Following Council approval on May 25, 2016, the City launched the one-year Community Recognition Pilot Program involving: Civic Centre clock tower lightings and/or flag raisings on a community flag pole on Mississauga Celebrations Square.

Since 2015, the City has held 63 community flag raisings and 268 clock tower lightings.

Year	Tower Lighting	Flag Raising
2015	7	0
2016	28	12
2017	19	10
2018	35	14
2019	104	17
2020	65	9
2021	10 (to date)	1 (to date)



Present Status

Today, the program has proven to be very attractive to Mississauga's not-for-profit groups who can highlight their important causes and the work being done within their organizations.

Since 2015, the program has grown 443 per cent in just five years. This is best shown in the charts as above from 2015 to 2020.

Although the program was paused from March 17 to July 31, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has continued to grow since its resumption on August 1, 2020.

In reviewing the policy, staff reviewed best practices from other municipalities and sought feedback on this topic from members of Council and the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee on February 10, 2021.

Benchmarking

In terms, staff conducted a survey of the top 10 municipalities in Canada with the largest and fastest-growing populations between 2011 and 2016 (based on the [2016 Census](#)) to determine their community recognition practices.

In short, all have different types of recognition activities in place. Activities range in nature, including flag raisings, illuminations, proclamations and more. Municipalities that offer recognition activities most similar to Mississauga, include Brampton, Calgary, Hamilton, Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver. Of note, after conducting a review of best practices, the City of Edmonton discontinued their flag raising program in 2020.

A full benchmarking report is attached in Appendix 3. The report includes data from the municipalities of Brampton, Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg.

Comments

Staff are proposing some changes to the Community Recognition Program and Policy.

Updates to the Community Recognition Policy (Appendix 1) include the addition of:

- **Council requests**, intended to streamline the process to request recognition activities
- **City Reserved period**, including a list of days reserved for internal, City programming
- **State of Mourning**, including dates that the clock tower will be dimmed to align with the half-masting of flags at the Civic Centre and/or all City facilities
- **Observing Tragic Events**, in recognition of a sudden and significant local, national or international tragic event that impacts the community
- **Decision-Making Process updates**, where staff will make a recommendation, in writing, to the Mayor or Acting Mayor on requests that may be considered contentious
- **Housekeeping updates** based on current practice

Contentious Requests

From time to time, the City receives community requests that prove to be contentious in nature. In these cases, the community recognition activity of choice is most often flag raisings and more specifically, the raising of national flags.

All Community Recognition requests are evaluated against policy criteria, however external factors such as geopolitical and social issues may have an impact on the evaluation of the request. At times, it has been difficult for staff to objectively evaluate a cause against policy criteria while balancing the potential for a negative community response based on current or past political or social issues associated with the national flag in question.

While the policy states that: "...[t]he community recognition request... [must] not have the potential to incite violence and hatred..." the community response cannot always be anticipated. These requests are often deferred to Council for direction and leave the City in an undesirable position with certain community groups who may not agree with Council's decision.

Since 2015, the City has received several requests that have proven to be contentious.

Based on the challenges of contentious flag raisings, staff has prepared the following recommendation for Council's consideration:

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to offer community flag raisings with an updated request process for national flags

With this approach, community groups would be asked to submit their national flag raising requests for the upcoming calendar year in the fall of the preceding year. Staff would compile these requests into a corporate report to be shared annually with Council for approval.

Any requests for national flag raisings received after the report has been approved must receive separate Council approval, either through a deputation or in writing to Council via the Clerk's Office.

This change would ensure that staff, Council and community groups have clarity on which national flags will be raised in the coming year and will allow any contentious requests to be addressed in advance.

If approved, this process would begin for 2022 national flag raisings. 2021 national flag requests will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis; groups would be notified of the new process for 2022.

Pending the direction of Council on the recommendation outlined above, staff will update the Community Recognition policy accordingly.

Flag Protocol at City Facilities Updates

The Flag Protocol at City Facilities Policy (Appendix 2) has been updated to reflect minor process changes and align with the updated Community Recognition Program Policy.

In addition to the updates outlined in the Flag Protocol at City Facilities policy, staff noted that in November 2020, Council approved adding the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation flag to the flags on display in Council Chamber. Staff will update the Flag Protocol at City Facilities policy accordingly once the First Nation flag has been officially installed in the Chamber.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts resulting from the recommendations in this report.

Conclusion

In keeping with the City's regular review of policies, staff have updated the Community Recognition Program Policy based on feedback from Council, DIAC and benchmarking with like municipalities. The recommendations within this report are intended to strengthen the policy, while offering clarity to staff and community groups who request recognition from the City.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Updated Community Recognition Policy

Appendix 2: Flag Protocol at City Facilities Policy

Appendix 3: Comparison and Rationale - Community Recognition Policy

Appendix 4: Community Recognition Program - Benchmarking Report



Gary Kent, CPA, CGA, ICD.D, Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Lindsay Francini, Supervisor, Employee Communications and Events