



Report to: General Committee

Meeting Date: October 22, 2019

SUBJECT: 2020 Council and Standing Committee Meeting Calendar
PREPARED BY: Martha Pettit, Deputy Clerk

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the 2020 Council and Standing Committee Meeting Calendar for January-December as outlined in Appendix “C” and allowing for all Council Meetings to be conducted starting at 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM with the option to host an evening Council meeting if so required, be adopted; and,
2. That staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

To adopt the City of Markham's Council and Standing Committee meeting calendar for January to December 2020.

BACKGROUND:

Each year, the Legislative Services and Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Department prepares a Council and Standing Committee meeting calendar for the following calendar year which outlines the date and time of each Council and Standing Committee meeting.

On December 12, 2018, Council approved the 2019 meeting calendar, which provided for conducting every other Council meeting during the day starting at 1:00 PM. The alternate Council meetings were conducted in the evening starting at 6:00 PM.

Public in-person attendance statistics that were tracked for 2019 show that very few individuals attend (in-person) a Markham City Council meeting either during the daytime or at the evening sessions, unless there is an item of significant interest to the public on the agenda (see Appendix “A”). Further, because all Standing Committee and Council meetings are audio and video streamed live, listeners do not need to attend (in-person) to hear the proceedings. A recent upgrade to the City’s A/V system allows staff to publish (to the City’s website) an audio/video recording of the actual meeting once the minutes are finalized. This new feature allows individuals to “re-watch” the proceedings at a time that is most convenient for them.

To-date, the Legislative Services and Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Department has received positive feedback regarding the implementation of daytime meetings from the public, Members of Council and staff. A review of comparable municipalities reveals that several large urban municipalities such as

Vaughan, Richmond Hill (for part of the year), Brampton, London, Mississauga, Toronto and Region of York conduct Council meetings during the day (see Appendix “B”).

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Seventeen Council meetings are proposed in the 2020 Meeting Calendar (see Appendix “C”). Outlined below are the four options for Council meeting start times proposed by staff for Council’s consideration.

Option 1 – All Daytime Council Meetings (Evening Meetings by Exception)

In this Option, all 2020 Council meetings will take place from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM with the ability to hold an evening meeting as required. The benefits of this Option include:

- Members of Council are “fresh” and not deliberating on important items after a long day of meetings, etc.
- Members of Council have the evenings free for constituent meetings, events, etc.
- Members of the public have the option to submit written submissions.
- Members of the public can listen in or watch live or at a time of their choosing.

Today’s workforce has changed and 9 to 5 is no longer considered the norm.

- Staff is readily available to provide further insight, clarification and respond to questions from Council and the public as required.

This is staff’s preferred Option.

Option 2 – Evening Council Meetings Once per Quarter (Additional Evening Meetings Held by Exception)

In this Option, one evening Council meeting is held per quarter with an option to hold additional evening meetings as necessary. This would result in four evening Council meetings per calendar year - to be held on the following dates in 2020:

	Proposed Date	Meeting Start Time
First Quarter	Mar 31	6:00 PM
Second Quarter	Jun 9	6:00 PM
Third Quarter	Sept 29	6:00 PM
Fourth Quarter	Nov 24	6:00 PM

**Council meetings not falling on the above dates would start at 1:00 PM.

The benefits of this Option include:

- Offering a variation in Council meeting start times provides alternatives/options for deputants desiring to attend in-person.
- Evening meetings are already built into the annual Council and Committee Meeting schedule.
- Agendas can be planned to ensure that items of significant public interest will be held during an evening meeting.
- Members of Council have the daytime free for constituent meetings, events, etc.

Option 3 – Evening Council Meetings Every Other Month (Additional Evening Meetings Held by Exception)

In this Option, an evening Council meeting will take place every other month (with an option to hold additional evening meetings as necessary). This would result in five evening Council meetings per calendar year to be held on the following dates in 2020:

Proposed Date	Meeting Start Time
Jan 28	6:00 PM
Mar 31	6:00 PM
May 12	6:00 PM
Sept 29	6:00 PM
Nov 24	6:00 PM

**Council meetings not falling on the above dates would start at 1:00 PM.

The benefits of this Option include:

- Offering a variation in Council meeting start times offers alternatives/options for deputants desiring to attend in-person.
- Evening meetings are already built into the annual Council and Committee Meeting schedule.
- Agendas can be planned to ensure that items of significant public interest will be held during an evening meeting.
- Members of Council have the daytime free for constituent meetings, events, etc.

Option 4* – Alternate Every Other Council Meeting between Daytime and Nighttime Starts (*Status Quo – same process used in 2019)

In this Option, Council meeting start times alternate between a daytime start time and an evening start time – this system was in effect for 2019. This would result in eight evening Council meetings per calendar year to be held on the following dates in 2020:

Proposed Date	Meeting Start Time
Jan 28	6:00 PM
Feb 25	6:00 PM
Mar 31	6:00 PM
May 12	6:00 PM
Jun 9	6:00 PM
Sept 29	6:00 PM
Oct 27	6:00 PM
Nov 24	6:00 PM

**Council meetings not falling on the above dates would start at 1:00 PM.

The benefits of this Option include:

- Offering a variation in Council meeting start times offers alternatives/options for deputants desiring to attend in-person.
- Evening meetings are already built into the annual Council and Committee Meeting schedule.
- Agendas can be planned to ensure that items of significant public interest will be held during an evening meeting.
- Members of Council have the daytime free for constituent meetings, events, etc.

Staff recommend Option 1 - All Daytime Council Meetings (Evening Meetings by Exception). In this Option, all Council meetings in 2020 would have a start time of 1:00 PM, with the ability to conduct evening meetings as required. This practice is in keeping with other large urban municipalities and, based on 2019 meeting attendance statistics, will have little to no impact on in-person meeting attendance by the public. It also has the benefit of allowing for greater participation by City staff in Council meetings should they be required to respond to questions by Members of Council.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Not applicable

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED

Not applicable

RECOMMENDED BY

Kimberley Kitteringham
Director, Legislative Services
& Communications

Trinela Cane
Commissioner, Corporate Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix "A" – 2019 In-Person Attendance Statistics for Council Meetings

Appendix "B" – Table of Comparable Municipalities - Council Meeting Times

Appendix "C" - Proposed 2020 Meeting Calendar for Council and Standing Committee meetings