



Report to: General Committee

Meeting Date: July 9, 2024

SUBJECT: Amendments to the City's Proclamations Policy
PREPARED BY: Kimberley Kitteringham, City Clerk, ext. 4729
Alida Tari, Manager, Access and Privacy, ext. 2082
Jennifer Evans, Legislative Services Coordinator, ext. 3835

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Staff Report entitled Amendments to the City's Proclamations Policy dated July 9, 2024 be received; and,
2. That Council approve the *revised* Proclamations Policy attached as **Appendix "B"**; and further,
3. That staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to propose minor amendments to the Council approved Proclamations Policy to aid in the efficient and effective administration of the Policy. These amendments were identified as part of a broad review of existing policies by Legislative Services staff.

BACKGROUND:

On May 3, 2011, Markham City Council adopted the Proclamations Policy (attached as **Appendix "A"**). Since the adoption of the Policy, over 180 new proclamations have been approved by the City. The Policy outlines the process for handling requests for proclamations issued by the City to recognize significant individuals, events, organizations, or community groups within Markham. Proclamations acknowledge interests or relationships to Markham, including but not limited to:

- Arts celebrations
- Cultural celebrations
- Charitable fundraising campaigns
- Civic promotions
- Public awareness campaigns; and,
- Honouring individuals or organizations for special achievement(s)

The City does not issue proclamations for the following:

- Individuals, events, organizations or community groups with no demonstrated significant interest or relationship to the City;
- Political parties or political organizations;
- Religious organizations or celebrations of religious events;
- Business or commercial enterprises;
- Illegal matters, including matters contrary to corporate policies or by-laws;
- Matters which defame the integrity of the City;

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- Discriminatory or inflammatory matters;
 - Matters designed to incite hatred or disorder; and.
 - Matters which are untruthful.

In accordance with the Policy, all proclamation requests must be submitted in writing to the City Clerk using the prescribed form at least (3) three weeks prior to the first day of the requested period of the proclamation. The City Clerk will review all applications to ensure they comply with the Policy. Markham City Council, or the City Clerk during Council recess, will determine if they meet the criteria specified in the Policy. Once a proclamation request has been approved, it is placed on a five (5) year list and if the request remains consistent with the Policy, it does not require Council approval. If the proclamation was not previously approved by Council or was approved by Council more than 5 years before the current request, the City Clerk will make a recommendation to Council to approve or deny the proclamation. Any proclamation approved or denied by the Clerk during Council recess will be placed on a Council agenda for information purposes.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

As part of a routine practice of reviewing existing policies, Legislative Services staff are recommending the following minor amendments to the Policy:

1. Approval Criteria

The Policy currently prohibits the issuance of a proclamation for religious organizations or celebrations of religious events. Staff propose implementing an exception to this restriction to allow for the approval of proclamations for religious heritage months. The proposed change reflects feedback received by the Legislative Services Department regarding the desire in the community for the City to recognize religious heritage months.

2. Approval Process for New Proclamations

The Policy currently mandates that the City Clerk place all requests for new proclamations (those not on the five-year approved list) on a Council agenda, even if they meet the approval criteria. In practice, these new proclamation requests are rarely brought up for discussion by a Member of Council during meetings. To help streamline Council agendas as much as possible, staff propose revising the Policy to remove the need for Council approval of new proclamation requests. Instead, these requests would be sent to the Mayor's Office for approval, along with a recommendation from the City Clerk to approve or deny the request. The Mayor would then be responsible for approving new requests but will consult with the Council on requests that require additional consideration. This change aims to increase process efficiency and reduce the burden on Council agendas.

3. Authorize the City Clerk to approve proclamations for specific days being recognized by the City of Markham

Staff propose amending the Policy to allow for the ongoing approval of the following annual proclamations recognized by the City, consistent with the Markham's dedication to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all:

- Tamil Heritage Month (January)
- International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27)
- National Day of Remembrance and Action against Islamophobia (January 29)
- Black History Month (February)
- Chinese Heritage Month (February)
- Hellenic Heritage Month (March)
- Irish Heritage Month (March)
- Persian Heritage Month (March)
- International Women's Day (March 8)
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21)
- Sikh Heritage Month (April)
- National Day of Mourning (April 28)
- Armenian Heritage Month (May)
- Asian Heritage Month (May)
- Dutch Heritage Month (May)
- Jewish Heritage Month (May)
- National Public Works Week (May)
- South Asian Heritage Month (May)
- National Indigenous History Month (June)
- Filipino Heritage Month (June)
- Hakka Heritage Week (June)
- Italian Heritage Month (June)
- Portuguese Heritage Month (June)
- Pride Month (June)
- Recreation and Parks Month (June)
- Seniors Month (June)
- National Indigenous Peoples' Day (June 21)
- National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism (June 23)
- Canadian Multiculturalism Day (June 27)
- Emancipation Day (August 1)
- Firefighters' National Memorial Day (September)
- Franco-Ontarian Day (September 25)
- Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day (September 25)
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30)
- Fire Prevention Week (October)
- German Heritage Month (October)
- Hispanic Heritage Month (October)
- Islamic Heritage Month (October)
- Korean Heritage Month (October)
- Local Government Week (October)

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- National Disability Employment Awareness Month (October)
 - Ontario Public Library Week (October)
 - Women’s History Month (October)
 - Hindu Heritage Month (November)
 - Remembrance Day (November 11)
 - Christian Heritage Month (December)
 - National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (December 6)

With this change, sponsors of the above-noted events will no longer be required to submit an annual application to the Legislative Services Department. Staff also request authorization for the City Clerk to add additional proclamations being recognized by City of Markham to this above list as needed, in consultation with the Mayor’s Office.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

None.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

None.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The City of Markham recognizes that proclamations hold significant meaning for our diverse residents as they recognize and celebrate the diverse cultural, historical, and social contributions of our community residents. By issuing proclamations, the City raises awareness of significant events, causes, and achievements, fostering a sense of pride and unity among residents. These proclamations also serve to educate and inform the public, highlighting the values and priorities of the City of Markham. Through this formal recognition, Markham demonstrates its commitment to inclusivity, respect, and the celebration of our shared heritage and community spirit.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Not Applicable

RECOMMENDED BY:

Kimberley Kitteringham
City Clerk

Trinela Cane
Commissioner, Corporate Services

Appendix “A” – Current Proclamations Policy

Appendix “B” – Proposed Revised Proclamations Policy