



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: August 25, 2011

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**SUBJECT:** Community Flag Raisings & Flag Protocol Policy  
**PREPARED BY:** S. Huycke, Public Services & Records Coordinator (x4290)

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) THAT the report entitled “Community Flag Raisings & Flag Protocol Policy” be received; and,
- 2) THAT Council approve the proposed Community Flag Raisings & Flag Protocol Policy; and,
- 3) THAT Council delegate the authority for approving or denying requests for Community Flag Raising(s) that have been previously approved by Council within 5 years of the request date to the Clerk; and,
- 4) THAT Council delegate the authority for approving or denying requests for Community Flag Raising(s) to the Clerk during Council’s summer recess (if required), subject to the terms of the Community Flag Raisings & Flag Protocol Policy; and,
- 5) THAT the list of approved Community Flag Raisings be brought forward to Council once a year for information and review purposes; and further
- 6) 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 obtain Council’s approval of a Community Flag Raisings & Flag Protocol Policy, and to seek the delegations of Council authority for approving or denying requests for Community Flag Raisings to the Clerk during Council’s summer recess if required.

**BACKGROUND:**

Legislative Services is in the process of reviewing a number of policies and practices related to protocol, including policies associated with the flying of flags at municipal facilities. Flags are recognized symbols of nations, territories and community organizations. Community flag raisings enhance public awareness of activities important to Markham residents, and flying flags at half-mast denote official periods of mourning.

The recommended policy and protocol provides clear direction and an administrative framework for the proper and consistent use of flags and flagpole(s) at all municipal facilities.

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**OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**

Markham has no formal policy related to the flying of flags on flagpole(s) at municipal facilities, and has relied on past practice to provide direction in respect to this issue. The lack of formalized policy can lead to confusion with respect to events such as flag raisings and flying flags at half-mast.

Clear, concise and specific policies provide guidance for all interested parties. They are written expressions that provide consistent and logical decision-making in the implementation of corporate values, mission, and vision, as well as setting out the organization's intentions and principle related to a particular topic.

The proposed Community Flag Raisings & Flag Protocol Policy (attached as Appendix "A") accomplishes these goals by codifying Markham's past practice in clear rules, principles and procedures. The proposed Policy establishes a framework for the consistent use flags at all municipal facilities. It is guided by well established rules of protocol for the flying flags. Highlights of the proposed Policy are as follows:

1. The Policy ensures that Community Flag Raisings, honouring Markham's diversity and important community events, occur in a fair, orderly, and consistent manner. It establishes an administrative framework which will allow Staff to properly track flag-raisings, while ensuring compliance with this and other policies.
2. The Policy clarifies the usual configuration of flags at all municipal facilities, ensuring consistency and adherence to flag etiquette; and,
3. The Policy provides clear directives for flying flags at half-mast to commemorate solemn occasions and periods of official mourning. The Policy provides a comprehensive list of Public Office Holders and individuals to be remembered through the flying flags at half-mast, as well as a list of other solemn occasions which the Town routinely recognizes. Furthermore, the Policy provides a framework allowing other solemn occasions to be observed by the Town.

### Community Flag Raisings

Markham has had a long practice of recognizing the diversity of its residents, and other important community events, through the flying of national and community group flags at the Civic Centre. A list of flag raisings approved by Council between 2006 and 2010, and in 2011 up to June 30<sup>th</sup> is attached as Appendix "B".

Currently, flag raising requests are received by the Office of the Mayor, Legislative Services, or Communications & Community Relations, and are placed on a Council Agenda for approval. Once approved by Council, the particular flag is raised, often as part of a community celebration, on the flag pole where the Town's Flag is usually

displayed. When multiple flag raisings occur at the same time, the current practice is to use the flagpole in the amphitheatre adjacent to the pond.

Upon approval of the policy, staff will have a new flagpole installed at the Civic Centre. This new flag pole will be located in the grassed area immediately north of the Jerusalem Rose Garden next to the Peace Garden (attached as Appendix “C” is a map of the proposed location for the new flagpole). Upon completion of the installation work all Community Flag Raising will be restricted to the new flagpole and the one adjacent to the amphitheatre. The benefits of the revised approach are two-fold. Firstly, the additional flagpole will enhance the Civic Centre’s capacity to accommodate such events, while ensuring protocol is preserved for the National, Provincial and Town flag display. Secondly, the establishment of a permanent community flagpole will provide a new focal point for observers providing even more predominance to important community celebrations. Until the installation work is complete Community Flag Raisings will continue to happen in accordance with the current practice.

#### Delegation of Authority

The proposed delegation of authority to Clerk mirrors the authority delegated by Council in the “Proclamation Policy” on May 3, 2011. The delegated authority will allow for request for community flag raisings to be processed in a timely manner during Council’s summer recess. Staff are also recommending that the Clerk be given authority to approve community flag raising requests that have been previously approved by Council within 5 years of the current request, provided that the new request is consistent with the proposed Policy.

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)**

Funding for the new flagpole will be accommodated in Asset Management “Corporate Accommodation – Annual Program. This expenditure, if approved, will be funded from account 750-101-5399-9218 Corporate Accommodation – Annual Program to the maximum amount of \$5,000.

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS**

Not applicable

#### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

Not applicable

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**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

Community & Fire Services Commission  
Corporate Communications & Community Relations

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

07/09/2011

08/09/2011

X 

Kimberley Kitteringham  
Town Clerk

X 

Andy Taylor  
Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENTS:**

[Attachment "A" – Community Flag Raisings & Flag Protocol Policy](#)

[Attachment "B" – Flag Raisings Approved by Council in 2006 to 2010, and  
2011 to June 30<sup>th</sup>](#)

[Attachment "C" – Map of location for proposed Community Flag Pole](#)