

**Delegation to address a matter scheduled on a Council meeting agenda for February 13, 2017**  
*By Jobert Sevileno*

**Item on the agenda:**

*By-Law 2017-XX to govern the proceedings of Council and Committees of Council*

**In regards to # 4.15 (g) i.**

According to the text, requests for financial assistance may be made only in relation to an item listed on an Agenda, only in writing, only to the Treasurer, and only about existing programs, policies or procedures. The text severely restricts the access of Citizens to their Council in situations when they need assistance or help. Furthermore, while elected officials represent public interests, City's staff is hired or appointed, may reside outside Markham and may therefore not be representative of the public. Directing such requests to the Treasurer may also result in transferring power from the City's elected officials to City's staff. As a result, such limitations on the occasions Citizens may come before their Council would play a role in how connected do people feel with (or represented by) their municipal government.

**In regards to 4.16 (b)**

According to the text, Members can exercise their right to introduce an item under "New/Other Business" only if the item is urgent, is a matter of emergency or is time sensitive. There is certain subjectivity, however, in defining urgency, which could be related to a person, to a family, to a community, to an organization, to the entire city, etc. How would the "emergency" or the "time-sensitivity" of an item be defined? Who would define it? Should not Members also be able to introduce an item based solely on the importance of that item for the community? Time-sensitive matters are always important but important matters are not always time-sensitive.

**In regards to 7.7 (a) iii.**

While it is understandable that Members of the public may not heckle or jeer during a Meeting, forbidding them to clap may be seen as unreasonably limiting. Asking Citizens to remain silent at all time during public Meetings may result in increasing the perception of distance and disconnection between the public and their elected officials. Disallowing clapping during public Meetings may even be seen as peculiar: at inaugural meeting, after proclamations or announcements that are celebratory in nature, after passing motions related to events with major impact on the community etc.

Finally, Citizens should not be expected to know the code of conduct at public Meetings. Council should educate Citizens about what is expected from them through "info-brochure" or "FAQ sheet". The By-law could also demonstrate a greater care for cultivating in the Citizens of a better understanding of the importance of dealing with all matters in a civil and mutually respectful way.