



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Legislative & Clerk Services

To: Policies and Priorities Committee

From: Robert Auger, Director Legislative Services & Clerk

Date to Council: November 26, 2024

Report Number: LCS-2024-18

Subject: Revisions to the Flag Protocol Policy No. 38

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Report LCS-2024-18 Revisions to the Flag Protocol Policy No. 38 **be received;**

And that Council provide direction to Administration on the revisions to the Flag Protocol Policy outlined in Attachment 1;

And further that the revised Flag Protocol Policy **be finalized and presented** at a future Policies & Priorities Committee meeting in 2025.

Background

The Flag Protocol Policy No. 38 (Policy) was adopted by Council in May 2002. The Policy provides guidance on the proper etiquette and display of flying the National Flag of Canada, Provincial flag and the Town of Tecumseh flag. The Policy also provides guidance on half-masting for mourning and special requests.

For flag etiquette, Administration follows the provisions set by the Government of Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage for protocols on flag display placement on a flagpole, alignment, maintenance and disposal.

Comments

The Flag Protocol Policy has not been revised in over 20 years. The passing of a former Town Councillor earlier this year brought to light the need to modernize the Policy for greater clarity on flag protocols, to define observances which the Town participates in, and to provide general guidance on the administration of this Policy. In **Attachment 1**, a draft policy is presented with the proposed revisions highlighted in yellow. Specifically, the following sections were revised on half masting for mourning, observances and special requests as outlined below.

Half Masting for Mourning

The half masting of national flags is a well-established procedure whereby countries bestow an honour and express a collective sense of sorrow. Given that such flags are recognized as paramount symbols of their nations, the act of half-masting is a dramatic visual statement that speaks to the sense of loss that is shared by all citizens.

In the current Policy, provisions for half masting for mourning are provided in a general nature for specific dignitaries such as Members of the Royal Family, Prime Ministers, Council Members, and present-day employees of the Town. However, the Policy lacks guidance on whether all Town flagpole locations participate in half masting or just specific locations. This leads to confusion and additional staff time to attend to all locations to lower the flags to half mast. Furthermore, past practice on half masting with specified dates from the federal or provincial governments has been inconsistent.

The draft policy recommends that the Town will lower flags for mourning only at the Town Hall location for staff efficiency. Requests for other locations will be considered by the Clerk and can be permitted considering the nature of the event (for example, the half masting for Remembrance Day at the Legion location). Half masting typically will be for one day and the three flags at Town Hall would be lowered during office hours of 8:30 am to 8:30 am the following day. On events such as Indigenous Veterans Day (Nov 8) and Remembrance Day (Nov 11) being a few days apart, Administration is recommending lowering the flags for four days during this time for efficiency in administrative operations as well as in a calendar year these dates may be on the weekend.

The Policy also outlines that when directed from the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Town will lower flags to half mast at dates and times that are not listed in the Policy. The federal and provincial governments provide notices on their websites of dates identified for half masting for mourning. There have been times where the Town has not participated in half masting for mourning as staff were not aware of the date. In

reviewing the annual dates from the federal and provincial governments, the draft policy identifies the annual half mast for mourning days recognized by both levels of government. The dates listed below are for Council's determination as to whether the Town would like to participate.

- a. April 9 - Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge
- b. April 28 - The Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace
- c. June 23 - National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism
- d. November 8 - Indigenous Veterans' Day
- e. November 11 - Remembrance Day
- f. December 6 - National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women
- g. January 27 - International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Specific dates can be removed, and other dates can also be added if directed by Council. Administration is requesting direction on mourning dates the policy should include. Alternatively, Council could choose not to participate in half masting for mourning.

Administratively, when the flags are lowered, the Legislative & Clerks Services Department will notify the Community & Recreation Services Department to lower the flags and will work collaboratively with the Communications team to raise awareness and provide a summary to be posted on the Town's website on the half masting.

Flag Raisings

In the Town's Strategic Plan for 2023-2026, community health and inclusion are identified as a strategic priority that includes integrating community health and inclusion into our places and spaces and everything we do. Over the years, the Town has raised flags in honour of observances if requested by a community group or organization. This practice has led to an inconsistent approach to annual reoccurring observances of recognizing specific months or days. The Policy does not address specific flag raisings the Town will participate in, nor does it provide Administration with guidance on which types of flags would be considered appropriate or inappropriate for the purposes of being raised on Town property.

To celebrate the strength and inclusivity of our Town, a section on flag raising observances has been added to include procedures, criteria and restrictions. Administration has reviewed the national and provincial recognized observances that are enacted annually. Similar to half-masting for mourning, the list provided below has been developed based on the federal and provincial protocols for observances. The

dates provided below indicate specific dates and months. In the case of observing a specific month, the flag will be raised on the first day of the month for the duration of the month. If the last day of the month falls on a weekend, the flag will be removed on the first day Town Hall is open. The dates list below are for Council's determination as to whether the Town would like to participate in these and/or other observances.

- a. February – Black History Month
- b. March 8 - International Women's Day
- c. June – Pride Month
- d. June 21 - National Indigenous Peoples Day
- e. September 25 - Franco – Ontarian Day
- f. September 30 - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

In those limited instances where there is an observance that falls on two separate dates, staff has reviewed other local municipalities and selected the time when most local municipalities provide observance. For example, Pride month is observed by the Federal government from June to September while the Provincial government observes Pride month in June which is similar to local school boards.

Specific dates can be removed, and other dates also can be considered and added if directed. Administration is therefore requesting direction from Council on whether they would like to participate, in these and/or other observances.

It should also be noted that the Town has all flags for the observances listed above except for Black History Month and International Women's Day. If Council decides to move forward with these observances, flags will need to be purchased at a cost of \$100.00.

For the flags that are raised, the Legislative & Clerk Services department will coordinate with the CRS and the communications team to have a brief notice posted on the Town's website.

Flagpole Locations

The Town has 29 flag locations across the Town as outlined in [Attachment 2](#). Some locations have more than one flagpole such as the Town Hall and Lakewood Park which have a total of 10 flagpoles. At the Town Hall Front location, there are 3 flag poles which display the National flag, Provincial flag and Town of Tecumseh flag. Special Requests whether from members of the public and/or members of Council are periodically received and accommodated, for which the Town of Tecumseh flag is removed, and a Community flag is raised in its place for a designated period. In specific months, there are several community groups requesting that their flag be raised. For example, in the

month of June, there have been requests for flag raisings for National Accessibility Week, Pride Month, and Italian Heritage. When this occurs, staff will try to reach a compromise with the community groups in an effort for all to be recognized. This practice has been challenging for Administration as the requests are for flags to be raised at the Town Hall Front location for greater visibility. When a request is accommodated, the Town of Tecumseh flag is removed, and the community group flag is raised.

To alleviate these conflicting time requests, the draft policy is proposing that Council consider erecting an additional flagpole to accommodate such Special Requests. By erecting a community flagpole, it publicly demonstrates the Town's support and provides community groups and organizations with an additional tool for raising awareness on celebrations and/or events. The additional flagpole will also provide some flexibility to Administration when multiple requests are received that may have conflicting dates. If considered, Administration is requesting direction on the merits of adding a community flagpole at the time the Lesperance Road Trail is under design.

Currently, the Policy does not provide a process for submitting a Special Request for flag raisings. Traditionally, these Special Requests for flag raisings are received by Clerk via email from a community group. In the draft policy, a standard process has been added where community groups and organizations can apply to have their flag flown by submitting an online form similar to the application process for Policy No. 111 (Illumination of Town Buildings policy). If Council and/or Council Members wish to make a Special Request for a flag raising, this request will be made and accommodated by way of Council Resolution.

Administration has also considered combining the Illumination of Town Hall Buildings online application with flag raising in an effort that a community group may apply to both. This application process will continue to be administered through the Legislative & Clerk Services Department. All requests will be reviewed with the criteria identified in the draft policy to ensure that the request is in keeping with the Town's policies and procedures.

Furthermore, the draft policy as provided some clarity on restrictions on requests. Requests will be denied if the community group or organization consists of one or more of the following:

- Political parties or political organizations
- Religious organizations or religious events or celebrations
- Celebrations, campaigns, or events intended for profit-making purposes
- Events that support discrimination, hatred, violence, or prejudice.

The Community & Recreation Services staff maintain all Town flagpoles and flags on a regular basis to ensure that dignity and respect are demonstrated. If a flag is not in good condition, staff remove the flag and replace it with a new flag which is a time-consuming process given the number of flagpole locations. To provide a consistent approach to flagpole management, Administration recommends maintaining the flagpoles located at administrative offices, regional parks and/or locations of national or international significance. Administration has reviewed the current flagpole locations using these criteria and recommends the removal of flagpoles highlighted in yellow in Attachment 2. Reducing the number of flagpoles will provide for greater efficiencies in staff time, financial savings of equipment and supplies, and a consistent approach in the administration of this policy. A provision has been added in the draft policy that if there is a request for a new flagpole location, the location must meet the criteria and be approved by Council.

Consultations

Community & Recreation Services

Financial Implications

The Community and Recreation Services Department maintains all flags and flagpoles in the Town which can take considerable staff time to travel to each location to review the condition of flagpoles and flags, and repair if necessary. The costs of a flag is \$100.00. In the proposed removal of 9 flag poles, there are two financial options for consideration:

In Option A, the full removal of the flagpole which include the flagpole unit, excavation and staff time is estimated at \$2,000.00 per flagpole for a total cost to remove all 9 flagpoles for \$18,000.00.

In Option B, there is an option to only remove the flagpole unit and not excavate which decreases costs significantly to \$300.00 per flagpole for a total removal of 9 flagpoles for \$2,700.00.

If Council considers moving forward with erecting a new community flagpole, the estimated costs are \$8,000 which includes the materials and staff time and be funded through the CRS Facilities Capital Budget – Annual Recurring Lifecycle.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	<u>2023-2026 Strategic Priorities</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainable Growth: Achieve prosperity and a livable community through sustainable growth.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Health and Inclusion: Integrate community health and inclusion into our places and spaces and everything we do.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Service Experience: Enhance the experience of Team Tecumseh and our citizens through responsive and respectful service.

Communications

Not applicable

Website Social Media News Release Local Newspaper

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Jennifer Alexander, MPA, AOMC, CMO
Deputy Clerk & Manager Legislative Services

Reviewed by:

Robert Auger, LL.B.
Director Legislative Services & Clerk

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
1	Draft Policy
2	Town of Tecumseh Flag Locations