

Julia Adamson – Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas Inc. – Proclamations Limited to One Per Year for Organizations

ISSUE

Should the City amend Policy No. C01-028, *The Flag and Proclamations Policy* to increase the number of proclamation requests an organization can apply for annually?

BACKGROUND

2.1 History

At its [Regular Business Meeting on October 28, 2019](#), City Council adopted Policy No. C01-028, *The Flag and Proclamations Policy* (the “Policy”). The passage of this Policy was the initial step in taking a comprehensive approach to addressing existing and emerging protocol related issues for City Council.

At its meeting held on [March 13, 2024](#), the Governance and Priorities Committee (“GPC”) considered a communication submitted on behalf of the Friends of the Saskatoon Afforestation Areas Inc. requesting organizations be permitted to apply for more than one proclamation in a year. GPC resolved:

That Administration review the policy and report back regarding increasing the number of proclamation requests an organization can apply for annually.

2.2 Current Status

The Administration will be bringing forward a new Protocol Policy which encompasses a number of different topics that have already been the subject of reports to City Council. Changes were not planned to the flags and proclamations portion of the new Policy, but it is intended that the provisions of this Policy be incorporated into the new Protocol Policy.

The Administration has also started to receive requests to install lighting displays at civic facilities. The City Clerk’s Office has been using the criteria in this Policy to also evaluate those requests.

2.3 Public Engagement

The Administration has not completed any public engagement with respect to this issue. GPC requested this report in response to a communication and presentation by a member of the public on this issue.

2.4 City of Saskatoon's Current Approach

Currently, the Policy provides that any organization may request only one flag raising, one proclamation or one combination of flag raising and proclamation within a calendar year (January 1 to December 31).

2.5 Approaches in Other Jurisdictions

Different jurisdictions handle the issue of proclamations in different ways. However, many municipalities have a policy that allows for proclamations.

The Cities of Calgary, Toronto, and London all have policies that limit requests for proclamations to one per calendar year per organization. The City of Waterloo and City of Winnipeg policies provide that they shall not issue proclamations. The Cities of Edmonton, and Vancouver issue proclamations but details about the number of proclamations allowed per year per organization were not found on their websites.

OPTIONS

Option 1: Status Quo

This option proposes no changes to the Policy. The current rule with respect to one proclamation, one flag raising or one combination flag raising/proclamation per calendar year per organization would continue.

Advantages:

- No changes to the City's current processes would be required.
- No Policy amendments would be required.

Disadvantages:

- Organization that has raised this issue would continue to only be allowed one proclamation per calendar year.

Option 2: Change the Policy to Allow Two Proclamations Per Organization Per Calendar Year

This option proposes to raise the limit in the current Policy from one to two permitted proclamations per year. The number two has been chosen, but the number could be changed to any other number such as three or four. The point of this option would be to simply continue to have a limit on the number of proclamations allowed under the Policy but increase the number from one to another number.

Advantages:

- Increases the number of proclamations allowed per calendar year per organization.
- Maintains some limit on the number of proclamations that would be required to be processed by the City Clerk's Office.

Disadvantages:

- Unlimited proclamations per calendar year per organization would continue to not be allowed under the Policy.

Option 3: Change the Policy to Remove the Limit on the Number of Proclamations Per Organization Per Calendar Year Allowed

This option proposes to remove the limit in the current Policy from one request per year to allow for an organization to make unlimited requests for proclamations.

Advantages

- Would allow any organization to request an unlimited number of proclamations per calendar year.

Disadvantages

- Would increase the number of proclamations required to be processed by the City Clerk's Office every year.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend to City Council that Policy No. C01-028, *The Flag and Proclamations Policy* be amended to:

1. Allow an organization to apply for up to two proclamations per calendar year (Option 2: Change the Policy to Allow Two Proclamations Per Organization Per Calendar Year); and
2. Add requests for lighting displays at civic facilities to the Policy using the same criteria as flag raisings.

RATIONALE

There is no legal requirement for the City to grant requests for proclamations or flag raisings. It is not essential to the operations of the City of Saskatoon. The City is not required to have a Policy that allows for proclamations and flag raisings. It is a service that the City can choose to provide or not. In fact, issuing proclamations and allowing for flag raisings increases risk to the City of Saskatoon. There has been legal action and criticism leveled against municipalities for issuing proclamations in recognition of some causes and not others or agreeing to a flag raising in some circumstances and not others.

However, many municipalities do have a policy that allows for both proclamations and flag raisings. In 2019, the City undertook an extensive review of our Policy, and a new Policy was adopted by City Council to ensure the rules around when the City would consider a request for a proclamation or a flag raising were clear. The City has operated successfully under the new rules for the past number of years.

We note that similar to the City of Saskatoon, the Cities of Calgary, Toronto and London only allow for one proclamation per calendar year per organization.

Raising the limit from one to another defined number is manageable under our current practices with respect to proclamations. However, the Administration would prefer that the Policy continue to include a defined number of proclamations allowed per year to minimize the number of requests the City may receive. The Administration is not proposing any changes to the number of flag raisings allowed per year or the number of combination proclamation/flag raisings allowed per year. As there is limited access to the flag poles located at City Hall, it would be problematic to increase this number. The Administration has proposed the limit be increased to two proclamations per year, but another number such as three or four could be substituted.

The City also now receives lighting requests in addition to requests to issue proclamations or flag raisings. Commonly, these are a request to light up City Hall for a specific event. The Administration has been handling these requests using the flag raising and proclamations criteria. However, it would be of assistance to specifically include these requests in the Policy. Therefore, the Administration is recommending that requests for lighting displays at civic facilities be added to the Policy and that the same criteria as flag raisings be used to evaluate these requests. The Administration has reviewed the practices of some other municipalities with respect to lighting requests and they appear to handle them in a similar format.

ADDITIONAL IMPLICATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

There are no financial or other implications. The Policy will require amendment if City Council adopts the recommendation or wants to make alternate changes to the Policy.

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

If the decision of City Council results in a change to the Policy, the Administration will update the information on the City's website so that the rules continue to be clear.

APPENDICES

1. Policy No. C01-028, *The Flag and Proclamations Policy*

Report Approval

Written by: Cindy Yelland, City Solicitor
Reviewed by: Adam Tittlemore, City Clerk
Approved by: Jeff Jorgenson, City Manager

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