

**To:** Chief Administrative Officer  
**From:** Jennifer Russell, Corporate Officer  
**Subject:** **Flag Etiquette Policy**

**Date:** March 20, 2023

---

### Recommendation(s)

1. That Flag Etiquette Policy ORG.6 be amended to add the purpose statement “To ensure that all flags at City Hall and other City owned or operated facilities are flown and displayed in a consistent and appropriate manner.”
2. That Flag Etiquette Policy ORG.6 be amended by deleting section 2(a) in its entirety and replacing it with ONE of the options described in the report as a new section 2(a).
3. That Flag Etiquette Policy ORG.6 be amended by adding a new section 2(b):  
“Flags displayed at City facilities shall be displayed, in general, in accordance with the Government of Canada Flag Protocol, as amended from time to time. Flags should always be treated with dignity and displayed properly out of respect for what and who they represent. ”
4. That Flag Etiquette Policy ORG.6 be amended by deleting sections 4(d)(x) and (xi) and replacing them with a new section “(x) The current Mayor or a current Councillor, or a former Mayor or Councillor who has served as an elected official for at least two terms of office”.
5. That Flag Etiquette Policy ORG.6 be amended by deleting section 4(d)(xiii) and replacing it with a new section “(xiii) In exceptional circumstances, and in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer, the Mayor may approve the half-masting of flags on occasions not provided for in this policy.”

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present suggested amendments to the flag etiquette policy to ensure that all flags at City Hall and other City facilities are flown and displayed in a consistent and appropriate manner and to clarify language in some of the existing sections.

### Background

Municipal, provincial and federal flags are flown at several City of Mission facilities as symbolic identification of the three levels of government.

On April 19, 2022, the flag policy was amended by Council resolution C2022-061 by including a provision for the half-masting of the flags to mark the passing of any recipient of a Freedom of the City award, and to specify that half-masting will be done from the time of death until the evening of the day of the funeral/celebration of life or for one week, whichever is shortest. This was the first amendment to the policy since 2005.

On June 6, 2022, Council resolution RC22-255 directed staff to review the flag policy and report back to Council. This direction was the result of a request to fly the Progress Pride Flag at a

municipal facility. Instead of flying this flag on a municipal pole, it was put on prominent display at the Mission Leisure Centre during Fraser Valley Pride Week 2022.

During the review of this policy and comparison with other neighbouring municipalities, other opportunities to improve and clarify some of the language used in the policy were identified. The amendments recommended in this report are to:

- a) add a policy purpose statement;
- b) clarify which flags will be flown on municipal flag poles (the existing clause 2(a) is wordy and unclear);
- c) clarify that the flags will be half-masted at the passing of currently sitting members of Council or for past members who served on Council for at least two terms of office; and
- d) clarify the discretionary powers of the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer to lower flags for a purpose not covered in the policy.

## **Discussion and Analysis**

The purpose of the Flag Etiquette Policy is to ensure that all flags at City facilities are flown and displayed in a consistent manner, and to provide guidelines for when it is appropriate to half-mast them. The City of Mission follows the Government of Canada guidelines for flag etiquette, and many elements of the current policy were taken from these flag protocols.

Over the years there have been many requests from outside organizations and groups to fly flags that represent various causes. The challenge with these requests is in the application of a fair procedure (i.e. what is allowed for one should be allowed for all).

That said, Mission has flown the Royal Canadian Legion Poppy Flag during Veterans' Week for many years. This practice is not set out in any policy, and there is no one still working for the City of Mission who remembers how this originally came about. This is the only non-governmental flag displayed in the municipality.

Some municipalities allow for the flying of non-governmental or cause-driven flags, and some do not. It is usually the larger municipalities that have a courtesy flagpole available for use that accommodate external requests to fly a particular flag.

While Mission does not currently have a courtesy flagpole to display flags that represent groups, organizations, or community events, there are other ways the City can show support and raise awareness around important events, special occasions, and commemorative days. Other ideas include using programmable light displays to illuminate a civic building or designing custom banners to be featured along First Avenue.

Council is asked to make a decision in **Recommendation #2** above regarding whether or not to extend special permission to the Royal Canadian Legion or any other agencies to fly certain flags at particular times.

### **Option 1**

"Only the National Flag of Canada, the Provincial Flag of British Columbia, and the City of Mission Flag are raised at City facilities."

### **Option 2**

"As a general rule, only the National Flag of Canada, the Provincial Flag of British Columbia, and the City of Mission Flag are raised at City facilities. Council may resolve to raise a flag in recognition of a nationally recognized holiday or event, such as flying the Royal Canadian Legion Poppy Flag at City Hall during Veterans' Week."

### **Option 3**

“The National Flag of Canada, the Provincial Flag of British Columbia, and the City of Mission Flag are raised at City facilities. Council may consider written requests to raise other flags at select locations. Requests must be made in writing at least 30 days in advance. Flags must be provided by the requesting party and be the same size as the other raised flags. The City will not display flags supporting discrimination, prejudice, hatred, violence, political or religious movements, or commercial entities.”

### **Financial Implications**

Financial and other resourcing implications will depend on the direction from Council.

There would be financial implications if Council chooses to recognize special days or events through other banner or lighting options. Staff would provide additional details in a subsequent report to Council.

There would be operational impacts to the facilities maintenance, parks, and administration departments if Council chooses to accept requests from other parties to raise flags (coordinating with the other parties and the physical raising and lowering of the flags).

### **Communication**

Should Council decide to amend the policy, the new version will be posted to the City’s website and distributed to staff through Pipeline.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Municipal, provincial and federal flags are flown at several City of Mission facilities as symbolic identification of the three levels of government. The purpose of this report is to present suggested amendments to the flag etiquette policy to ensure that all flags at City Hall and other City facilities are flown and displayed in a consistent and appropriate manner and to clarify language in some of the existing sections. Financial and other resourcing implications will depend on the direction from Council.

**Report Prepared by:** Jennifer Russell, Corporate Officer

**Reviewed by:** Taryn Hubbard, Manager of Communications and Public Engagement

**Approved for Inclusion:** Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

### **Attachment(s)**

Attachment A: Current Flag Etiquette Policy ORG.06