

# MAKING MEETINGS WORK

Meeting Procedures 101



## AGENDA

- ▶ Council Authority
- ▶ Meeting Rules & Etiquette
- ▶ Public Participation

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - COUNCIL

- ▶ Council = Mayor and Councillors
- ▶ Council is a continuing body
- ▶ Powers, duties and functions of a municipality are to be exercised by Council by bylaw or resolution at a Council meeting

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

- ▶ Consider the City's well-being and interests
- ▶ Contribute to development & evaluation of City policies & programs respecting services and other activities
- ▶ Participate in Council and committee meetings

## MEETINGS - COUNCIL

- ▶ What constitutes a meeting?
  - ▶ Material part of the decision-making process
  - ▶ Quorum - 5 of 9 must be present
  - ▶ Public Notice of Meeting required
- ▶ Open to the public unless there is a specified reason to close the meeting to the public (*Charter* sections 89 & 90)
- ▶ Staff should be present

## OPEN AND CLOSED MEETINGS - COUNCIL

- ▶ Meetings must be closed by resolution
- ▶ 15 subject matters a Council may consider at a closed meeting
- ▶ 4 subject matters a Council must consider at a closed meeting
- ▶ *Charter* section 90(1) and 90(2) respectively

## CLOSED MEETINGS - COUNCIL

- ▶ Most common Closed Meeting subjects:
  - ▶ **Land** acquisition, disposition or expropriation, s. 90(1)(e);
  - ▶ **Labour** or employee relations, ss. 90(1)(a) and (c);
  - ▶ **Legal** advice, including litigation affecting the City, ss. 90(1)(g) and (i);
  - ▶ Negotiations with Province s. 90(2)(b)

## MEETING PROCEDURES - COUNCIL

- ▶ Regular Council Meetings:
  - ▶ May be during the day or evening
  - ▶ Will have a provision for a “closed” portion
  - ▶ May have more informal workshops, shirt sleeve sessions, etc. - these are still meetings
  - ▶ May include an opportunity for public to speak directly to Council



## MEETING PROCEDURES - COUNCIL

- ▶ Council Meeting Agenda (example):
  - ▶ Public in Attendance / Delegations
  - ▶ Council Committee Reports
  - ▶ Development Application Reports
  - ▶ Non-Development Application Reports
  - ▶ Draft Resolutions
  - ▶ Bylaw readings
  - ▶ Mayor and Councillor Items

## MEETING PROCEDURES - COUNCIL

- ▶ Public Hearing:
  - ▶ Public Hearing may be during the day or evening
  - ▶ Regular Meeting may immediately following close of public hearing (not usual)
  - ▶ Length of public hearing can vary from 30 minutes to several hours

## MEETING PROCEDURES - COUNCIL

- ▶ Public Hearings:
  - ▶ Purpose to consider OCP and Zoning Bylaw amending bylaws
  - ▶ Anyone who believes their interest in property is affected may speak
  - ▶ No debating during a public hearing
  - ▶ No representations to Council after public hearing is closed

## MEETING PROCEDURES - COUNCIL

- ▶ Public Hearings (example):
  - ▶ Staff presentation of application
  - ▶ City Clerk reads list of correspondence
  - ▶ Applicant speaks
  - ▶ Public speaks
  - ▶ Council may ask questions of staff, applicant and public as appropriate

## MEETING PROCEDURES - COUNCIL

- ▶ Mayor (or Deputy Mayor) presides
- ▶ Mayor determines who speaks (including staff) and in what order
- ▶ Resolution must be moved and seconded before it can be discussed or voted on “placed on the floor”
- ▶ “Call the question” - time to vote

## MEETING PROCEDURES - COUNCIL

- ▶ You are assumed to have voted in favour of the resolution unless you indicate your opposition by raising your hand when the Mayor asks “Those opposed”
- ▶ Cannot abstain from voting
- ▶ Mayor votes as a member of Council and does not break ties - a tie vote is a defeat

## MEETING PROCEDURES - COUNCIL

- ▶ Resolutions may be moved, discussed and voted on at open or closed Council meetings
- ▶ A bylaw may only be given readings at an open Council meeting
- ▶ Bylaws require at least two meetings in order to adopt

## MEETING PROCEDURES - BYLAWS

- ▶ Some bylaws require a majority vote of all Council rather than a simple majority of those present
- ▶ Some bylaws require public or provincial approval prior to adoption



## PUBLIC INPUT - COUNCIL

- ▶ Public input at open or closed meetings is restricted / regulated by legislation and bylaw
- ▶ Public input at Public Hearings and for development applications is governed by rules of procedural fairness, legislation and bylaw
- ▶ Public can attend any open meeting
- ▶ Ability to directly address Council varies

## PUBLIC INPUT - COUNCIL

- ▶ Advantages and challenges of permitting public input at Council meetings
- ▶ Open and transparent to have public speak directly to Council, but
- ▶ Difficult to control what is said or requested
- ▶ Expectation that Council will “do something” - cannot always be met

## MEETING PROCEDURES - COUNCIL

- ▶ Staff should always refer to the Mayor as “Mayor SURNAME” or “Your Worship”
- ▶ Staff always refer to councillors as “Councillor SURNAME”
- ▶ Staff always address the Mayor during Council meetings or public hearings and not individual councillors

## MEETING PROCEDURES - COUNCIL

- ▶ The degree of meeting formality varies greatly within the province
- ▶ Play analogy - comedy or tragedy
- ▶ Important to find a meeting style that suits your local government that balances procedural rules and getting things accomplished!