

**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

**DATE:** 2021 Apr 20

**FROM:** DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

**SUBJECT:** PROCLAMATIONS POLICY

**PURPOSE:** To provide criteria and guidelines for evaluating proclamation requests, and procedures for processing and presenting proclamations.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** the Committee recommend Council to adopt the proposed Proclamation Policy as outlined in Section 3.2 of this report.

**REPORT****1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Each year, the City of Burnaby receives between 45 and 60 requests from community groups and coalitions, national non-profit organizations, and individual City departments to issue proclamations recognizing an event, ethnic community, cause or campaign. The City currently does not have formal guidelines for evaluating proclamation requests, which makes it sometimes difficult to assess these requests. City staff have investigated how other municipalities in BC and across Canada deal with proclamations, and have proposed a proclamation policy for the Committee and Council's consideration.

**2.0 POLICY SECTION**

The proposed policy is aligned with the City of Burnaby's Corporate Strategic Plan by supporting the following goals and sub-goals of the Plan:

**Goal**

- A Connected Community
  - Social connection –  
Enhance social connections throughout Burnaby

- Partnership –  
Work collaboratively with businesses, educational institutions, associations, other communities and governments
- An Inclusive Community
  - Celebrate diversity –  
Create more opportunities for the community to celebrate diversity
  - Serve a diverse community –  
Ensure City services fully meet the needs of our dynamic community
  - Create a sense of community –  
Provide opportunities that encourage and welcome all community members and create a sense of belonging
- A Healthy Community
  - Healthy life –  
Encourages opportunities for healthy living and well-being
  - Healthy environment –  
Enhance our environmental health, resilience and sustainability
  - Community involvement –  
Encourage residents and businesses to give back to and invest in the community

### 3.0 BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Survey of Community Findings

The Marketing Department, working with the offices of the Mayor and the City Clerk, surveyed Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley municipalities, as well as selected cities across Canada, to assess how proclamations are handled in other municipalities. Results of the survey of Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley municipalities are summarized below:

| Issue proclamations                                                                                                           | Do not issue proclamations                                                                                                         | Proclamations read aloud at Council meeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Anmore, Delta, New Westminster, North Vancouver City, North Vancouver District, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Surrey, Vancouver | Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Coquitlam, Langley City, Langley Township, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Richmond, West Vancouver, White Rock | New Westminster*, North Vancouver City, Port Coquitlam**, Vancouver**<br><br>*only if Mayor or a Councillor wishes to read them, or if a representative of the requesting organization is present at the meeting<br>** only if a representative of the requesting organization is present at the meeting |

To: Executive Committee of Council

From: Director Corporate Services

Re: Proclamations Policy

2021 May 5..... Page 3

The survey revealed that approximately half of the Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley municipalities issue proclamations and half do not. Of those that do, most include them on the agenda but only a few read proclamations aloud at Council meetings – and only if a representative of the requesting organization is in attendance. Most of the municipalities that do not issue proclamations have a formal policy that explains why they do not. For example, the explanation included in the City of Langley's proclamations policy reads: "In order to avoid discrimination or offending any group, organization, individual or event, it is the policy of Council not to issue proclamations." Similar explanatory statements are included in other written policies.

A cross-Canada survey revealed that many large Canadian cities issue proclamations, but few read them aloud at council meetings.

| Issue proclamations                                   | Do not issue proclamations | Proclamations read aloud at Council meeting |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax | Winnipeg, Montreal         | Ottawa – special circumstances only         |

Other observations from the regional and national surveys:

- Some large Canadian cities (notably Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Ottawa) post specific criteria and conditions for proclamation requests on their website, along with procedures. For example, the City of Vancouver lists the following criteria on its website:

"Proclamations are official announcements that promote events, causes, and individuals celebrated by the people and community groups of Vancouver.

What you can request proclamations for:

- Local events and initiatives
  - Charitable and community-service initiatives
  - Health and public service initiatives
  - Multicultural awareness
  - Special anniversaries for non-profit organizations that benefit communities
  - Someone who's made a major community contribution"
- Toronto and Calgary appear to have the most stringent criteria and are very specific about who they will NOT grant a proclamation to (e.g. political organizations, commercial organizations, causes that may be divisive, etc.)
  - Several cities (notably Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto) will only accept proclamation requests from organizations or individuals based in their city. In addition, some cities require that the event/activity/cause has a direct link to the local community and will only recognize events/activities/causes that are occurring in the municipality and/or beneficial to the local community.

- Several cities (notably Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto) have online forms on their websites that organizations must complete in advance to request a proclamation.
- Some city's proclamations are longer than others – e.g. all City of North Vancouver proclamations are limited to three or four “whereas” statements while Burnaby's have, in some cases, as many as nine. The City of Ottawa limits requests to a total word count of 130; some of Burnaby's run well over 200.
- Several cities set a deadline for accepting requests – most are four weeks prior to the day/month/week to be proclaimed. Burnaby currently does not have a deadline for accepting requests, which makes it sometimes difficult to process last minute requests in time for Council meetings.

A further analysis was conducted of all proclamations issued by the City of Burnaby in 2019, 2020 and YTD 2021. A total of 114 proclamations have been issued during that timeframe recognizing 84 separate organizations/causes/events (several are repeated annually). In this analysis, it was noted that a number of proclamation requests are being made “en masse” by national organizations with arguably no direct relevance to Burnaby.

From the surveys and analysis it would appear that the City of Burnaby is more generous than most municipalities in BC and across the country in accepting and processing proclamation requests and in devoting time to publicizing proclamations at council meetings.

### **3.2 Proposed Proclamations Policy**

The proposed Proclamation Policy outlines the criteria for accepting and announcing Proclamations.

Criteria for accepting Proclamation requests:

- Recognize charitable causes, initiatives, or events; arts and cultural celebrations; public awareness or fundraising campaigns; achievements of local organizations, and other issues of local importance to Burnaby;
- The requesting organization is a registered charity, non-profit organization or community coalition; the cause is of local, national or international significance with relevance to Burnaby; the request is linked to an event or activity taking place in Burnaby; and the cause or event contributes to the economic, social and/or cultural fabric of the community;

To: Executive Committee of Council

From: Director Corporate Services

Re: Proclamations Policy

2021 May 5..... Page 5

- A proclamation will not be issued if recognizing the cause, event, campaign or organization may be contentious, divisive or inconsistent with City policies or bylaws; and it is partisan political, commercial and has no relevance to Burnaby;
- Limit length of proclamations to a maximum of five "Whereas" statements and 200 words in total; and
- Establish submission deadline of Proclamation request to be four weeks prior to the Proclamation date.

The accepted Proclamation requested will be printed and posted at City Hall, posted on the City website and acknowledged at the Open Council meeting. Proclamations, will, however, not be read out loud.

Subject to the Committee and Council's approval, staff will develop procedures and application forms for online submission of Proclamation requests.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The Proclamations Policy will serve to standardize the proclamation procedure, ensure their local relevance, provide guidance to staff and set expectations for local organizations. It is recommended that Council adopt the proposed Proclamations Policy that will provide staff and council with criteria and guidelines for evaluating and processing requests.



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DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

Copy: Acting City Manager

