

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Community Flag Raisings and Flag Protocol Policy
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Corporate & Financial Services – Director of Legislative Services/City Clerk
<b>Approved by:</b>	Council
<b>Effective Date:</b>	December 10, 2012
<b>Date of Last Revision:</b>	May 10, 2023
<b>Review Date:</b>	As Required
<b>Policy Status:</b>	Revision

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework to govern applications for flag raising requests received from the community by the City, and to establish a consistent protocol for the flying of flags at all municipal buildings, properties, and facilities.

### **Policy Principles:**

Richmond Hill recognizes that flags, as symbols of nations, territories and community organizations, are important to residents of the municipality. Richmond Hill is committed to building upon and maintaining the rich heritage of protocol associated with the flying of flags. As a matter of practice, Richmond Hill uses special flag raisings to enhance public awareness of activities such as national holidays, multicultural events, fundraising drives, and historical commemorations important to the residents of Richmond Hill. The municipality also flies flags at half-mast to mark periods of official mourning or to commemorate solemn occasions important to the residents.

### **Scope:**

This Policy applies to Community Flag Raisings held at the Richmond Hill Municipal Offices, and to the flying of flags at any Richmond Hill municipal building, property, or facility.

### **Definitions:**

<b>City of Richmond Hill Flag:</b>	Means the flag approved by the Council of the City of Richmond Hill to represent the City of Richmond Hill, any flag representing the City of Richmond Hill approved by the Canadian Heraldic Authority, or other approved celebratory substitute as approved by Council or the City Manager's Office.
<b>Clerk:</b>	Means the City Clerk appointed by the Council of the Corporation of City of Richmond Hill, or his/her designate.
<b>Community Flagpole:</b>	Means a flagpole on City of Richmond Hill property that has been designated for Community Flag Raisings.

Flying a Flag at Half-mast:	Means the action of flying all flags, forming a single display of flags, at a position that is equal distance from the top and bottom of a flagpole, to mark periods of mourning or to commemorate solemn occasions.
Mayor:	Means the person who has been elected or appointed as Mayor (Head of Council) of the City of Richmond Hill or the person who is acting in that capacity in accordance with the City of Richmond Hill's Procedure By-law.
Members of Council:	Means a person who has been elected or appointed to an Office on Council, including the Mayor, a Regional & Local Councillor, or a Local Ward Councillor.
National Flag of Canada:	Means the flag approved by the Parliament of Canada as a national symbol of Canada.
Provincial Flag of Ontario:	Means the flag approved by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as a provincial symbol of Ontario.

## Policy Description

### 1. General Principles

The following general principles will apply in respect to all aspects of this Policy, and be used when interpreting the Policy:

- The municipality will use flags to celebrate Richmond Hill's diversity and honour those who have contributed to the life of the City;
- The flying of flags at any municipal facility will not be contrary to the principles of any other City policy; and,
- National flags of other countries will only be flown if approved or recognized by federal and provincial governments of Canada.

### 2. Community Flag Raisings

Richmond Hill shall designate at least two (2) Community Flagpoles at Richmond Hill City Hall for the purpose of Community Flag Raisings as outlined in this policy.

### 3. Community Flag Raising Criteria

The Community Flagpoles may be used to fly flags significant to the residents of Richmond Hill:

- in honour of national holidays;
- in support of fundraising drives; and
- to celebrate multi-cultural and civic events.

The Community Flagpoles will not be used to fly flags:

- of Political Parties;
- of Religious Groups;
- in support of fundraising drives that are political or religious in nature; or
- in support of groups, organizations, or events that promote beliefs contrary to any other City policy.

The City Clerk will be responsible for providing advice, as necessary, on the applicability of any of the above criteria to any application received for Community Flag Raisings.

#### **4. General Rules for Community Flag Raisings**

The general rules for Community Flag Raisings are as follows:

- i. Flags will be flown for up to one (1) week at a time;
- ii. Approvals and use of the Community Flagpole will be granted on a first come-first served basis; and,
- iii. When more than one Community Flag Raising occurs on the Community flagpoles simultaneously, the precedent for being flown in the customary position of honour will be determined as follows:
  - The Community Flagpole on the left hand side for someone facing the display, will be deemed the position of honour;
  - The National Flags of other countries will be given higher precedent over non-national flags;
  - Flags of sub-national governments (e.g. provinces, states) will be given precedent over flags of Community Groups; and,
  - Where the flags are of the same level of precedent, the position of honour will be assigned to the application received first by the City Clerk.
- iv. Individuals, groups or associations requesting Community Flag Raisings are required to provide the flag to be raised in advance of the date on which the flag raising will occur.

#### **5. Application Process for Community Flag Raisings**

All requests for Community Flag Raisings shall be made on an application form prescribed by the City Clerk and reviewed as part of the approval process.

Requests are to be submitted at least three (3) weeks prior to the day requested for the raising of the flag. If the request is associated with a Proclamation request, this policy shall apply to the community flag raising request only and the City of Richmond Hill Proclamation Policy shall apply to the proclamation request.

All flag raising requests will be reviewed by the Office of the Clerk to determine if they meet the criteria listed in section 3 of this policy ('Community Flag Raising Criteria'). The Clerk will notify

requestors if their request does not meet the Community Flag Raising Criteria. Requests that meet the Community Flag Raising Criteria will be forwarded to the Office of the Mayor for approval.

The Office of the Mayor will review and approve flag raising requests, when a flag raising request is approved by the Mayor, the Office of the Mayor will notify applicants of the approved request and copy all Members of Council and the City Clerk.

## **6. Record of Flag Raising Requests**

The Office of the Clerk will maintain a record of all flag raising requests received for at least five (5) years that will include information such as when the request was received, whether the request was granted or denied, the period of the flag raising (day, week, month), and the date approval was granted.

## **7. Communication**

Once a flag raising request has been approved, the following communication will be carried out:

- A letter will be sent from the Office of the Mayor to the organization whose flag raising request is approved with all Members of Council and the City Clerk copied.
- The Office of the Clerk will arrange to include notice of the flag raising on the City's website.

## **8. Flag Protocol**

Richmond Hill's protocol for the flying of flags shall be governed by procedures established under this policy, including:

- Customary Flag Configuration Procedure
- Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

Council is responsible for approving and amending this Policy, and the procedures applicable to this policy.

The City Clerk is responsible for the interpretation and implementation of this Policy. The City Clerk is also responsible for determining if a request for a Community Flag Raising meets the approved Community Flag Raising Criteria, receiving and processing applications for flag raisings for the consideration of the Mayor, notifying appropriate staff at City facilities of Community Flag Raisings and coordinating the raising of flags for the Community Flagpoles.

The Mayor is responsible for approving all applications for Community Flag Raisings that meet the Community Flag Raising Criteria as determined by the City Clerk and informing all Members of Council and the City Clerk of any and all such approvals.

## **Related Documents:**

Proclamation Policy



Customary Flag Configuration Procedure

Flying Flags at Half-mast Procedure