



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report To:	Council
From:	Meaghen Reid, Director, Legislative & Legal Services/Deputy Clerk
Date:	May 11, 2020
Report No:	CORS-028-20
Subject:	Amendment to Procedure By-law 007-2019 to allow delegations to participate electronically at Council Meetings in relation to the <i>Municipal Emergency Act, 2020</i>
Recommendation:	THAT Council approves the necessary by-law amending Procedure By-law 007-2019 to allow electronic delegate participation in Council meetings pursuant to the <i>Municipal Emergency Act, 2020</i>.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the March 30, 2020 Special Council Meeting, Council amended the Procedure By-law to allow electronic Council participation for Council members pursuant to the *Municipal Emergency Act, 2020*. Subsequent to that recommendation, three electronic Council meetings have been conducted with written submissions from delegations being circulated to Members of Council. The purpose of this report is to recommend the broadening of electronic Council meetings to allow for electronic delegate participation. Considerations and procedures for the electronic participation of delegations in statutory public meetings are currently being reviewed by staff and further information will be brought forward to Council at a later date.

Background

The following is an overview of key background events:

- On March 19, 2020, the Province authorized electronic Council participation through the *Municipal Emergency Act, 2020*.
- On March 24, 2020, the Town of Milton declared an emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On March 30, 2020, Council amended the Procedure By-law to allow for electronic Council participation during the declared emergency.
- Three Council meetings have been conducted successfully during this declared emergency using one singular platform, featuring a live feed on the Town's YouTube channel. Communication has been increased on the Town website and the



Town's social media platforms advising of the new meeting format during the declared emergency.

- At present, the Town's Procedural By-law does not provide for electronic delegate participation during a declared emergency. If a delegation has wished to present on a matter under consideration, they have been asked to provide the Clerk with a written submission no later than two hours prior to the start of the meeting, which has then been distributed to members and has formed part of the public record.

Discussion

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, regular business items have been included on Council agendas for Council's consideration. As such, it is recommended that electronic Council meetings during a declared emergency be broadened to include electronic delegate participation for these regular business items. Staff are confident that the current technical platform and Council procedures can be expanded to allow for access to the system for registered electronic delegate participation. Should Council approve the Procedure By-law amendments, delegations would be permitted to participate electronically as early as Council meeting scheduled for May 25, 2020.

Some important considerations:

- A meeting guide would be developed for electronic delegate participation at Council Meetings and would be shared on the website, and with all the registered delegates. It would include technological instructions as well as guidelines for accessing the system ahead of the meeting.
- Delegate requests can be submitted on the Town's website, as is the current practice. In addition, an alternative registration method will be provided to delegates such, as a phone number to assist delegates in filling out the form in the case of connectivity concerns.
- In order to assist staff in the coordination of electronic delegations and to test appropriate technology with delegates, all delegation requests will need to be received no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon) two days before the Meeting. If the Meeting is on a Monday, requests to delegate shall be submitted by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Thursday before the meeting.
- All requests to delegate must contain a copy of the delegate's intended remarks which will be circulated to all members of Council in advance as a back-up to any connectivity issues that may arise with the technology. All other rules in the Procedure By-law with respect to delegations shall apply to remote delegations.

Staff are expecting a small learning curve in adopting this new process and are prepared to manually intervene and interact with delegates as necessary to afford a level of comfort with the technology. Residents will be given the opportunity to connect to the platform and engage with Council through various avenues (full audio/video with presentations, audio/video only, audio only, written submission only), with all comments being included in the official record regardless of the level of engagement with the new platform.



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Council will be receiving a separate report with respect to electronic delegations at statutory public meetings under the Planning Act at a future Council meeting.

Financial Impact

It is expected that the receiving of electronic delegate participation can be accommodated within the Town's approved budget for 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Troy McHarg
Commissioner, Corporate Services / Town Clerk

For questions, please contact: Nina Lecic, Manager of Phone: Ext. 2131
 Legislative and Legal
 Services/Deputy Clerk

Attachments

n/a

CAO Approval
Andrew M. Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer