
Public Meeting Protocol

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Authority:	Council
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Purpose statement

As a supplement to the Town of Oakville Procedure By-law, this procedure will establish appropriate meeting protocol for attendees at all public meetings, including Council, standing committees and advisory committees and shall determine procedures to be followed in the event of disturbances arising at meetings.

Scope

This procedure applies to all attendees at public meetings, including Members of Council, staff and the public.

Procedure

1. Decorum and Respect

The importance of decorum and respect for all participants at meetings shall be enforced by the Chair. Accordingly, the Chair shall advise attendees that the role of the Chair is to ensure the provisions of the Procedure By-law are upheld and shall inform those present of the general by-law provisions as follows:

- a) attendees at meetings shall maintain order by not applauding, heckling or engaging in any behaviour that would be disruptive or disrespectful to other attendees; and
- b) all cell phones and electronic devices shall be turned off or otherwise set so as not to emit any audible sound during a meeting.

2. Inappropriate Behaviour – Harassment

Corporate policies support a positive and respectful workplace that is free from personal harassment. Attendees at meetings shall observe the rules of decorum and shall not make offensive statements that may be considered as personal harassment.

Where comments are made in the course of a meeting by a member or members of the public that, in the opinion of the Chair, constitute harassment or inappropriate behaviour, the Chair will advise the attendee(s) by stating that:

Such behaviour is inappropriate and will not be tolerated; or

Comments of that nature may constitute personal harassment under the town's Respectful Conduct policy and will not be tolerated.

Depending on the severity of the incident, and the willingness of the attendee(s) to comply with the policy, the Chair may expel or exclude any person who disturbs the meeting.

3. Expulsion from Meeting

Where attendee(s) have been requested to leave the meeting, such request shall be complied with and where such compliance is not forthcoming, the Chair shall recess the meeting and request the Clerk or Clerk's representative to enlist the assistance of security or police personnel.

Where deemed appropriate, the Chair or Council may determine that a delegation of Councillors or staff shall meet with the individual or group to address the dispute. Where the dispute has been determined to the satisfaction of Council or the Committee, it may resolve to permit any persons expelled from the meeting to return and, if deemed appropriate, continue to address the meeting.

References and related documents

Procedure By-law

Respectful Conduct Policy

RZone Procedure

Respectful Conduct Procedure

[Customer Service Standards and Customer Conduct Policy](#)

[Customer Conduct Procedure](#)

Definitions

Personal Harassment:

Personal harassment or bullying is any unwelcome, disrespectful, intimidating, abusive, cruel, vindictive or offensive behaviour, conduct or communications directed at an

individual or group. In some cases, it may erode their self-confidence or self-esteem and it may create an intimidating, offensive or embarrassing work environment often referred to as a Poisoned Work Environment.

Personal harassment may include, but is not limited to: name calling; insults; inappropriate jokes; threats; shouting; derogatory remarks (including messages that are threatening, derisive, or defamatory); spreading malicious rumours; persistent criticism and purposely ignoring any individual, exclusion.

Responsibilities

1. The Chair shall be responsible to uphold the rules and the observance of order and decorum at meetings.
2. The Clerk or Clerk's representative shall assist the Chair by interpreting and administering the rules of procedure.
3. In accordance with the Procedure By-law, the CAO, or [his/her/their](#) representative shall be permitted to make a statement at meetings when the integrity of the CAO or other employee of the town has been impugned or questioned.
4. The town, as a corporate body, is obligated to respond to any issues of harassment exhibited in relation to its employees, elected officials and volunteers.
5. The Clerk or Clerk's representative shall be responsible for soliciting immediate security assistance when required.