

## QUICK NOTES

### ADDRESSING COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

*Does your municipality occasionally, or often, have speakers who exceed the behavior boundaries of decorum at public meetings? If so, adopting **Guidelines**, such as those that follow, may prove to be helpful.*

*The following guidelines are intended to apply to **ALL** persons who make presentations, ask questions or otherwise address meetings of Municipal Council or of Committees of Council. Given that what is said at open meetings of Municipal Council and its committees is public, there may also be benefit in advising speakers that discussions taking place in open meetings of Council and its Committees may be audio-recorded; are part of the public record; and may be additionally be video-recorded.*

#### ***The Guidelines***

- Members of the public who are present at Council meetings are not permitted to speak to the Council unless such person(s) wishing to speak is/are first recognized by the Chair and given permission to do so.
- The Chair is in charge of meeting proceedings and may grant, or refuse to grant, a request to speak.
- Once approval has been given, questions or comments are to be addressed to Council through the Chair. For example, an individual wishing to address Council on a hazardous situation, may begin by saying “Through the Chair to Council, I wish to bring to Council’s attention the hazardous situation on Main Street which has caused some concern... .”
- A person addressing the Council must have permission of the Chair to ask questions of individual Councilors or staff members when the meeting is in session
- Debate is not to be entered into with individual Councillors, with staff members or with others in the room.
- Persons speaking or making presentations are limited to 10 minutes unless otherwise granted permission to speak for a longer period of time by the Chair.
- When a Council member asks a question of a speaker, the member of the public who is addressing the meeting should respond to the question by first asking the Chair for permission to reply.

- Comments or concerns as well as questions to a staff member or to a member of the Council should be asked through the Chair. For example: "With permission of the Chair, I would like to direct a question to (name of person)."
- There should be no discussion by visitors, by Council members or by employees of the Municipality when an individual has been recognized by the Chair to speak and is addressing the meeting.
- Unless directed by the Chair to another location, when addressing Council the speaker should stand at the podium facing the Chair and speak clearly into the microphone if one is available, but in any event speak at a level which can be heard throughout the room.
- Each speaker shall state his/her name, the reason for addressing the meeting and shall speak only on the topic(s) identified and/or permitted by the Chair.
- Speakers are to be as concise as possible and always are to be respectful when presenting information, asking or answering a question and/or offering comments.
- Improper, discriminatory, offensive or abusive language including negative or insulting remarks or comments towards individuals or groups is not permitted.
- The Chair may rule out of order any discussion that is considered inappropriate and may call for the speaker to cease. Failure to comply with a ruling of the Chair may result in a speaker being no longer able to address the meeting and/or being asked to leave the Council Chambers.