

Staff Report 2025-0241

Meeting: General Committee Meeting

Meeting Date: September 9, 2025

Subject: Procedure By-law Review: Addition of Procedures for Petitions or Letter Writing Campaigns and Correspondence Sent by the Municipality on behalf Council

Submitted By: Kevin Klingenberg, Municipal Clerk, Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Procedure By-law 2015-108, as amended, be further amended to add parts related to Petitions or Letter Writing Campaigns and correspondence sent by the municipality on behalf of Council, as outlined in sections 2 and 3 within Schedule B of Staff Report 2025-0241.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Petition or letter writing campaign procedures are proposed to be added into the Procedure By-law for additional clarity.
- Council resolutions or letters by or on behalf of the Mayor or Council are proposed to be added into the information package (info pack), with sent Council resolutions and letters of support sent to action a decision of Council required to be included in the info pack.

DISCUSSION

Background

Council directed in November 2024, through the approval of [Staff Report 2024-0582](#), the addition of regarding petitions or consolidation of written comments, and correspondence sent by the Town of Caledon to other governments during stage 3 of the Procedure By-Law workplan. The purpose of this report is to complete this direction.

The addition of petitions into the Procedure By-law was recommended as a notable gap in the Town of Caledon's procedures where many other municipalities had a defined process. No petitions had been recently submitted to the Town in November 2024. This democratic process has been utilized by the public in 2025 and is anticipated to continue to require defined procedures for effective fair governance of submitted petitions for Council's consideration.

Consolidation of written comments is in reference to receiving letter writing campaigns on topics before Council for their consideration. Council will occasionally receive similarly written, or templated letters, from the public regarding topics before them. Large volumes of written correspondence are susceptible to overwhelming the current process to individually add these letters to the agenda. Publishing the agenda in a timely manner may be prevented when this issue occurs when providing this needed information is at the utmost importance to Council and the community for their informed decision-making. A

better process is subsequently needed to publish large volumes of information in a short time frame and the basis for this part of the November 2024 recommendation.

It was noted in September 2024 through discussion of [Staff Report 2024-0409](#) at Governance Review Committee how sent correspondence by the municipality was not included in correspondence procedures. The Council direction to complete a correspondence procedure review was specifically on received correspondence, resulting in sent correspondence to be out-of-scope at the time. This expression of interest at Governance Review Committee was reviewed and determined as a viable solution to expand open, accountable, and transparent government initiatives at the Town of Caledon, and the basis for this part of the November 2024 recommendation.

Research

Research was conducted into Region of Peel and lower-tier neighboring municipalities petition procedures within their Procedure By-laws as outlined in Schedule A of this report. The Town of Caledon is the only Peel Region municipality currently without petition procedures in its Procedure By-law, while only a few municipalities outside of Peel contain petition procedures within their By-law.

Letter writing campaigns is a Town of Caledon specific issue. Research was limited to reviewing recent examples where several letters of the same topic on the agenda were received and determining how internal procedures can be enhanced.

Correspondence sent from the Town of Caledon to other governments is also a proposed governance accountability enhancement measure specific to the Town of Caledon. Research was limited to reviewing existing processes and correspondence in determining where enhancements could be made to existing procedures.

Analysis & Option – Petitions and Letter Writing Campaigns

Petitions are consistently defined to have the following aspects in the researched municipal Procedure By-laws; they are 1) legible, 2) regarding a shared caused or concern that is supported or opposed by more than one person, and 3) does not contain inappropriate or offensive language. The definition may be prescribed as a definition or within its procedures.

Petition procedures generally further align with the respective municipality's meeting procedures, specifically with procedures for submitting written correspondence or delegation items. Letter writing campaigns are not generally addressed in Procedure By-laws despite serving the same purpose as a petition and closely aligning with its definition.

It is proposed to integrate petition and letter writing campaign definition and procedures into one within the Town of Caledon's Procedure By-law as outlined in section 2 of Schedule B to this report. The definition is proposed to include the same three common defined principles of petitions consistently included in other researched municipal Procedure By-law's, using similarly applied wording. The definition is modified to accommodate letter writing campaigns as equivalent to a petition, allowing for the same procedures to apply for both correspondence types to resolve the identified and previously outlined Town of Caledon specific procedural issues.

The proposed procedures follow the approach taken by researched municipalities to integrate petition procedures within its broader preexisting meeting procedures. The proposed procedures identify:

1. Petitions are submitted to the Clerk for the next relevant meeting by the preexisting agenda deadlines,
2. Submitted petitions unrelated to an agenda item follow the same process as either delegation requests or submitted correspondence unrelated to an agenda item,
3. Submitted petitions related to an agenda item follow the same process as a delegation to an agenda item, by addition onto the agenda addendum,
4. Eligible petitions are considered a correspondence item on the agenda, and
5. Delegations can be made by the people who submitted the petition that was added on the agenda.

This proposed option provides a viable solution to the identified issues of there currently being a gap in procedures within the Procedure By-law for petitions or letter writing campaigns. Inclusion of these procedures provide necessary guidance and clarity to facilitating civic engagement using petitions or letter writing campaigns to communicate their shared concerns of relevant issues, formally establishing an additional channel for local democratic action and participation.

Analysis & Option – Correspondence Sent by the Municipality

There are existing procedures of including correspondence received by the municipality into the information package (info pack) for distribution to Council and made public as a part of the regular Council agenda publishing. Further, there are existing conditions for what is required to be added into the info pack under the correspondence section of Part 8 (Meeting Proceedings) of the Procedure By-law. It is proposed to enhance these sections of the Procedure By-law to include procedures for correspondence sent in addition to what is received at the Town of Caledon as outlined in section 3 of Schedule B to this report.

It is proposed to add correspondence sent by the Municipality, specifically by or on behalf of the Mayor or Council into the info pack definition. This proposed addition adds an additional (seventh) section to the info pack. The definition is subsequently proposed to be deleted and replaced to better itemize the definition for enhanced clarity and readability.

It is additionally proposed to require any Council resolutions and letters of support sent to action a decision of Council to be included into the info pack. Additional letters that do not action a decision of Council but is sent from the Mayor or Council also provides the availability for this correspondence to be included in the info pack with the proposed expanded definition.

The proposed updates enhance transparency and provides for a more open government framework to be implemented on implementing Council decisions, at negligible additional effort, resources, or time.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

COUNCIL WORK PLAN

Strategic Plan 2023-2035

This report is directly related to the following priority in Caledon's 2023-2035 Strategic Plan:

Service Excellence and Accountability

Implement improvements to the Town's governance framework by updating the Procedural By-law.

Details about Caledon's 2023-2035 Strategic Plan can be found at caledon.ca/strategicplan.

ATTACHMENTS

Schedule A: Petition Procedure Research

Schedule B: Proposed Procedure By-law Amendment