



TOWN OF
HALTON HILLS
Working Together Working for You!

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

FROM: Alex Fuller, Director of Communications

DATE: July 19, 2021

MEMO NO.: ADMIN-2021-0008

SUBJECT: Virtual Event Guidelines for Staff and the Community

PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:

This memo serves as a follow up to Report No. ADMIN-2021-0019 regarding the Protocol for Virtual Events and sets out the expectations of staff and participants in the public process, aligning with the community guidelines set out for social media and supporting the tenets of the Public Engagement Charter.

BACKGROUND:

The Town's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has included a move to hosting virtual consultations (e.g. public meetings, open houses and public information centres) on a variety of initiatives. Adopting this approach has ensured projects could continue to advance by providing residents opportunities to listen, learn and participate in live, project-specific, virtual environments. Staff has been pleased with the high level of public participation, noting that 10 online events held between March 2020-March 2021 attracted a total of 567 participants. Note that this figure does not include the thousands of people who provided input on projects via the Town's engagement platform 'letstalkhaltonnhills.ca' – an online tool that continues to be well utilized for community consultation.

As the Town works to re-open services in accordance with Provincial direction, it is anticipated that in-person public consultation will resume later this year. However, given the success of hosting events in a virtual environment (coupled with community expectations to continue using this approach), staff expects that virtual consultations will continue -- either in a hybrid approach coupled with in-person engagement or on its own, pending the initiative. As such, it is timely that the Town set out clear expectations and guidelines for participation in virtual consultations.

COMMENTS:

The proposed virtual event guidelines for staff and the community are as follows:

Virtual Event Guidelines for Staff

Town staff and/or its representatives, will:

- Encourage participation in a safe space where a variety of voices may be heard.
- Encourage inclusivity of all participants.
- Intervene to mitigate dominant or off-topic speakers, offering an alternate time/means for discussion as required.
- Intervene in the event of inappropriate language and/or behaviour which may include removing the participant from the event and/or any other action deemed appropriate by the Town.

Virtual Event Community Guidelines

The following guidelines build on the [Public Engagement Charter](#), specifically the 'Promise of Participation'.

By participating in a virtual event or forum, you agree to:

- Use your real identity, not impersonate or falsely claim to represent a person or an organization.
- Provide input relevant to the topic at hand.
- Not knowingly provide input that is false, inaccurate or misleading.
- Be respectful towards all participants and staff which includes:
 - Being kind, open-minded and respectful of other's contributions
 - Sharing the allotted time with others (no hijacking the meeting)
 - Acknowledging and/or respecting staff/moderator's attempts to steer the meeting
 - Not using malicious or offensive speech (e.g., profanity, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory)

CONCLUSION:

Following Council's receipt of the proposed guidelines, staff will be informed, and the information will be posted on the website. These guidelines will become an appendix to the Public Engagement Charter.

Reviewed and approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Mills", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Mills, Acting Chief Administrative Officer