



Staff Report to Community Advisory Committee

DATE: Tuesday, February 25, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Legislative Services

SUBJECT: Lowering of Langford Flag Policy –Proposed Repeal and Replacement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The flying of flags at half-mast is a strong visual statement that speaks to the sense of loss shared by members of the community. The City's Lowering of Langford Flag Policy (POL-0010-ADMIN) was adopted in 2006, attached as Appendix A. Staff believe this Policy would benefit by being repealed and replaced with a new policy with expanded language to ensure consistency with the City's longstanding flag protocol practices, respect for federal and provincial guidelines, and incorporation of a diverse and inclusive lens to what flags represent.

Staff have drafted proposed Flag Protocol Policy (POL-0179-ADMIN), attached as Appendix B, for Committee's consideration.

BACKGROUND:

At the June 19, 2006, Regular meeting, Council passed a resolution adopting a policy entitled "Lowering of Langford Flags" as follows:

"That Council adopt the Flag Lowering Policy as proposed:

Purpose

To recognize the loss of Canadian military and other personnel in the line of duty.

Implementation

a) The death, in action, of any Canadian Service Personnel,

b) The death, on duty, of any RCMP Officer stationed in the West Shore,

c) The death, on duty, of any Langford Firefighter,

will be recognized by flying the flags at half-mast from the time that the news is received and for the next full day.

Other deaths may be recognized in a similar fashion by approval of the Mayor."

Staff have identified that over the years the City's practices have varied in respect to how long and for

whom a flag has been lowered in the instance of a death as outlined in the existing policy. Most commonly, the flag has been lowered from the time of notification of death until the day of the funeral, or first operational day following the funeral.

COMMENTARY:

It is common for local governments to have policies establishing protocol for flying flags, inclusive of general flag etiquette, half-masting, flag raising, flying of guest flags, flag maintenance, and disposal procedures. The current policy is intended to address how the City responds to the loss of specific classes of persons including military and first responders lost in the line of duty. Flags, both at full and half-mast, also play a role in signifying support for certain activities both locally and around the world. Examples of this can be seen in flying a Pride flag or an Indigenous flag in recognition of Pride Month, Indigenous history month or Truth and Reconciliation Day.

Many of the municipal flag policies that were researched follow the national and provincial flag protocol guidelines. Staff propose that these guidelines be included within the City's policy, and that the new Policy be named "Flag Protocol Policy" as a significant number of additional protocols have been proposed to support staff working within the Policy when handling flags in the City of Langford.

The municipal policies reviewed typically included expanded lists of individuals recognized upon notification of death, such as past or present members of parliament, Mayors or Council members, active employees, firefighters, and RCMP members within the jurisdiction.

The proposed new policy includes an expanded list of who may be recognized, together with general etiquette and flag protocols that are consistent with the City's current procedures.

Staff are recommending that the proposed policy be adopted as presented.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The proposed new policy and flag protocol guidelines provide a balanced approach that can be managed within existing resources.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no noted legal implications in respect to the proposed repeal and replacement of this policy.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

5 – Good Governance

OPTIONS:

Option 1

THAT Community Advisory Committee recommend that Council repeal City of Langford “Lowering of Langford Flag Policy” (POL-0010-ADMIN) and replace with City of Langford “Flag Protocol Policy” (POL-0179-ADMIN) as presented.

OR Option 2

THAT Community Advisory Committee recommend that Council repeal City of Langford “Lowering of Langford Flag Policy” (POL-0010-ADMIN) and replace with City of Langford “Flag Protocol Policy” (POL-0179-ADMIN) as presented with the addition of the following amendments:

- a. _____;
- b. _____;
- c. _____.

OR Option 3

THAT Community Advisory Committee recommend that Council take no action with respect to City of Langford Lowering of Flags Policy (POL-0010-ADMIN) at this time.

SUBMITTED BY: Melisa Miles, Manager of Legislative Services

Concurrence: Donna Petrie, Senior Manager of Communications & Economic Development
Concurrence: Yari Nielsen, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities
Concurrence: Kevin Bowbyes, Deputy Director of Engineering and Public Works
Concurrence: Chris Aubrey, Fire Chief
Concurrence: Matthew Baldwin, RPP, MCIP, Director of Development Services
Concurrence: Leah Stohmann, RPP, MCIP, Director of Community Planning and Climate Change
Concurrence: Katelyn Balzer, P.Eng., Director of Engineering and Public Works
Concurrence: Michael Dillabaugh, CPA, CA, Director of Finance
Concurrence: Marie Watmough, Director of Legislative & Protective Services
Concurrence: Braden Hutchins, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Concurrence: Darren Kiedyk, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Appendix A – Current “Lowering of Flags Policy” (POL-0010-ADMIN)

Appendix B – Proposed “Flag Protocol Policy” (POL-0179-ADMIN)