

Purpose

1. To establish guidelines for the flying of flags at municipally owned facilities, including parks, and standards for processing requests related to flag flying, proclamations, and public awareness campaigns.

Scope

2. This policy applies to flags flown at all City-owned facilities and all requests for:
 - a. flag flying;
 - b. proclamations; and
 - c. public awareness campaigns;that are not associated with initiatives or operations approved by City Council or a local board or committee of the City.

Definitions

3. For the purposes of this policy,
 - “City” means the City of Owen Sound, and a reference to the City is a reference to the geographical area or The Corporation of the City of Owen Sound as the context requires;
 - “City Flagpoles” means the flagpoles located at the east side of City Hall facing 2nd Avenue East and flagpoles at other City-owned facilities, including parks;
 - “Community Flag” means any flag that has been submitted by a community group and approved to be flown;
 - “Community Flagpole” means the flagpole located at the south side of City Hall facing 8th Street East;
 - “Decoration” means an ornamentation but does not include decorations installed by City Council or a local board or committee of the City;
 - “International flag” means the official flag of another country;

“Proclamation” means a public or official announcement or declaration; and

“Public Awareness Campaign” means an organized effort to promote a cause, raise awareness or reach a goal and includes but is not limited to using Decorations; symbolic ribbons, stickers or lights; or posters, excepting posters placed on City poster or bulletin boards intended for public use or otherwise regulated by the City’s by-laws.

Policy

Proclamations and Public Awareness Campaigns

4. The City does not issue Proclamations.
5. The City does not support Public Awareness Campaigns, other than requests for illumination as outlined in this policy.

Flag flying etiquette

6. All flags shall be flown in accordance with the flag-flying etiquette of Canada as established by Heritage Canada.

Flags flown by the City

7. The City will:
 - a. fly the following flags on City flagpoles:
 - i. National Flag of Canada;
 - ii. Flags of the Provinces and Territories of Canada; and
 - iii. City Flag; and
 - b. fly Community Flags as follows:
 - i. on an as-requested basis.

Community Flagpole

8. All Community Flags that are approved will be flown on the Community Flagpole.
9. Community Flags will be flown in connection with a particular event by an organization.
10. Community Flags will be raised and lowered on business days when City Hall is open.

11. City Council delegates the authority to address Community Flag-flying requests to the City Manager provided that requests will not be approved where the flag-flying relates to:
 - a. political parties or political organizations;
 - b. religious organizations or religious events or celebrations;
 - c. celebrations, campaigns, or events with no direct relationship to the City;
 - d. celebrations, campaigns, or events contrary to City policies or by-laws;
 - e. celebrations, campaigns, or events intended for profit-making purposes;
 - f. attempting to influence government policy; or
 - g. supporting discrimination, hatred, violence, or prejudice.
12. The decision of the City Manager with respect to Community Flag-flying requests is final.
13. Notice of approved Community Flag-flying requests will be provided to City Council through a Council meeting agenda. There will be no Community Flag-flying presentations or deputations at City Council.
14. All requests for Community Flag-flying are to be made to the City Manager's office at least two (2) weeks prior to the requested date, in writing. Late requests may be accepted at the discretion of the City Manager.
15. All requests for Community Flag-flying must be made using the form in effect at the time of the request and include the following information:
 - a. name of the requesting organization or individual;
 - b. contact information;
 - c. details of requested event or occasion including date(s);
 - d. explanation of the purpose of the event or occasion;
 - e. picture of the flag to be flown; and
 - f. description of the applicant organization or individual including a brief history, and any other relevant information.
16. Requests will be considered on a first come, first served basis, based on the date the request is received by the City Manager's office.
17. Community Flag-flying requests will be approved for a maximum duration of seven (7) days unless the Community Flagpole is available for longer, in

which case the duration may extend to a maximum of fourteen (14) days at the discretion of the City Manager.

18. When the Community Flagpole is occupied, a second community flag may be flown in place of the Owen Sound City flag on the City's Flagpole at the discretion of the City Manager.
19. Individuals and organizations requesting flag flying are required to provide the flag to be raised with the following conditions:
 - a. flags may be no larger than 1.83 meters (6 ft) in width and 0.91 meters (3 ft) in height; and
 - b. the City is not responsible for damaged or lost flags.
20. Media notice and advertising related to flag flying are the responsibility of the requesting party.
21. Community Flag-raising may include a ceremony organized and managed by the requesting party. The City Manager's office will invite the City Council and City staff to all community flag-raising that include a ceremony unless the City is advised that the ceremony is private.
22. A Community Flag will not be flown more than once per calendar year.
23. Community Flag-flying requests can be submitted once for recurring events, provided the groups will notify the City if or when flag-flying shall discontinue. The group submitting the request will still be responsible for providing the physical flag annually.
24. Community Flags endorsed by the City may be hung inside Council Chambers at the discretion of the Mayor or City Manager.

International Flags

- 24.1 In addition to requesting that a flag be flown on the City's Community Flagpole, international flags may be flown at or displayed within City facilities at the written request of an event organizer, subject to the conditions outlined in this policy.
- 24.2 International flags that meet the criteria outlined in Section 11 of this policy may be raised for a period starting two (2) days prior to the associated event until two (2) days following the final day of the event. Eligible events may include, but are not limited to, sports tournaments, conferences, cultural festivals, or other community-focused gatherings with international participation.

- 24.3 City Council delegates the authority to address International Flag-flying requests to the City Manager.
- 24.4 Requests to fly an international flag must be submitted in writing to the City Manager no less than eight (8) weeks in advance of the event start date and clearly identify:
- a. the flag(s) to be flown;
 - b. the City facility where the flag is proposed to be displayed; and
 - c. the name and details of the associated event.
- 24.5 Requests for International Flag-flying will be considered on a first come, first served basis, based on the date the request is received by the City Manager's office.
- 24.6 The decision of the City Manager with respect to International Flag-flying requests is final.

Half-Masting of flags

25. The flying of flags at half-mast denotes a period of official mourning or commemoration.
26. The City follows Federal, Provincial, and local protocol in flying the National Flag of Canada on City Flagpoles listed below at half-mast on certain occasions as outlined in this policy.
27. Half-masting of flag(s) will occur in the event of the death of any of the following persons:
- a. the current Reigning Sovereign or the Sovereign's spouse, the Heir to the Throne or the Heir of the Heir to the Throne;
 - b. current or former Governor General of Canada;
 - c. current or former Prime Minister of Canada;
 - d. current or former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario;
 - e. current or former Premier of Ontario;
 - f. current or former Federal Member of Parliament for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound;
 - g. current or former Provincial Member of Parliament for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound;
 - h. current or former Mayor, City Council member or Grey County Council member;

- i. current City Committee member;
 - j. current City employee, including Owen Sound Police Services;
 - k. an employee retired from the City;
 - l. current School Board Trustee;
 - m. a resident of the City, who is a member of the Canadian Armed Forces, killed while deployed on operations.
28. Half-masting of flag(s) will occur at Corporal Robert T. James Mitchell Park on:
- a. October 3rd each year during the Meaford Canadian Veterans Freedom Riders unit's memorial visit; and
 - b. December 28th each year for a one-hour period.
29. Half-masting of flag(s) will occur annually on the following Days of Significance:
- a. April 28 – National Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace;
 - b. June 23 – National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism;
 - c. September 30 – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation;
 - d. November 8 – Indigenous Veterans Day;
 - e. November 11 – Remembrance Day; and
 - f. December 6 – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.
30. The Mayor or City Manager, or their designates shall have the authority to direct the half-masting of flags:
- a. in the event of the death of someone not identified in this policy; and
 - b. to recognize/commemorate a solemn occasion or result of other tragic events in the City.
31. City Fire Services staff shall be permitted to fly their flags at half-mast at the Fire Hall, at the discretion of the Fire Chief or designate, to recognize the death of any firefighter or team member.

Timing and Duration of Half-masting of flags:

32. Depending on the event, half-masting will have a different time period, location and communication piece as outlined in the chart below.

Person or Event	Timing of Half Mast	Location of Half Mast	Communication
27.a. – 27.g.	Duration established by the appropriate federal or provincial protocol offices	City Hall, Kelso Beach at Nawash Park, Harrison Park, Public Works, Greenwood Cemetery, Fire Hall, Bayshore Community Centre	Media Release Social Media
27.h. – 27.j.	From the first business day following the date the notice of death and/or recognition from next of kin is received until the date of the funeral or similar event for that individual	City Hall, Kelso Beach at Nawash Park, Harrison Park, Public Works, Greenwood Cemetery, Fire Hall, Bayshore Community Centre	Media Release Social Media
27.k.	On the date of the funeral or similar event for that individual	City Hall	Media Release Social Media
27.l. – 27.m.	For the same duration as established by the organization named in each of those sections	City Hall	Media Release Social Media

Person or Event	Timing of Half Mast	Location of Half Mast	Communication
29.a. – 29.f.	From sunrise to sunset on the Days of Significance or the closest business day before to the first business day following	City Hall, Kelso Beach at Nawash Park, Harrison Park, Public Works, Greenwood Cemetery, Fire Hall, Bayshore Community Centre	Media Release Social Media City Webpage

City Hall Illumination

33. Community requests for outdoor illumination of the east side of City Hall may be made by registered charities, non-profit organizations, and community groups.
34. Illumination of City Hall does not serve as an endorsement for political campaigns or government bodies, regardless of whether an organization's or nation's colours may be illuminated by the City in accordance with this policy
35. City Council delegates the authority to address illumination requests to the City Manager provided that requests will not be approved where the illumination relates to:
 - a. political parties or political organizations;
 - b. religious organizations or religious events or celebrations;
 - c. celebrations, campaigns, or events with no direct relationship to the City;
 - d. celebrations, campaigns, or events contrary to City policies or by-laws;
 - e. celebrations, campaigns, or events intended for profit-making purposes;
 - f. attempting to influence government policy; or
 - g. supporting discrimination, hatred, violence, or prejudice.
36. The decision of the City Manager with respect to illumination requests is final.

37. Notice of approved illumination requests will be provided to City Council through a Council meeting agenda. There will be no illumination presentations or deputations at City Council.
38. All requests for illumination are to be made to the City Manager's office at least two (2) weeks prior to the requested date, in writing. Late requests may be accepted at the discretion of the City Manager.
39. All requests for illumination must include the following information:
 - a. name of the requesting organization or individual;
 - b. contact information;
 - c. details of requested event or occasion including date(s);
 - d. explanation of the purpose of the event or occasion; and
 - e. description of the applicant organization or individual including a brief history, and any other relevant information.
40. Requests will be considered on a first come, first served basis, based on the date the request is received by the City Manager's office.
41. Illumination requests will be granted for a maximum duration of seven (7) days unless there are no conflicting requests in which case the duration may extend to a maximum duration of fourteen (14) days, at the discretion of the City Manager.
42. The requestor will determine the colour of illumination based on the pre-set options provided by the City at the time of the request.

Policy review

43. The Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness will review this policy:
 - a. every five (5) years to ensure effectiveness and compliance with current business processes; or
 - a. sooner, if required, based on legislative changes.
44. The Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness is authorized to make such administrative changes to this policy as appropriate to keep the policy current. Any revision to the policy's intent must be presented to Council for consideration.

Related Information and Resources

Internal

45. N/A

External

46. [Government of Canada – Heritage Canada – Flag Etiquette in Canada](#)

Appendices

47. N/A

Revision History

Authority	Date	Approval	Description of Amendment
Council	1998-11-09	Resolution	original
Council	1999-03-22	Resolution	
Council	2005-09-01	Resolution	
Council	2006-05-01	Resolution	
Council	2009-01-26	Resolution	
Council	2015-01-12	Resolution No. R-150112-014	
Council	2015-11-02	By-law No. 2015-148	
Council	2017-043	By-law No. 2017-043	
Council	2018-06-26	By-law No. 2018-093	
Council	2024-05-27	By-law No. 2024-071	new template – fully revised policy Formerly Policy CMA34
Administration	2024-11-1	Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness	Add Bayshore to s.32 – accidental omission
Council	2025-07-07	By-law No. 2025-074	Add International Flag definition and sections 24.1-24.6
Administration	2025-07-08	Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness	Add recognition of next of kin to s. 32