



POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Category: Administrative Services	Number: ADM.01/15(C)	QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD PROTOCOL – COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA
Type: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Procedure	Authority: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative	Approved By: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council <input type="checkbox"/> Chief Administrative Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Department Head
Office of Primary Responsibility: Corporate Administration		
Date Adopted: January 5, 2015	Council Resolution No: RC15/014	Date to be Reviewed: January 2016
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BACKGROUND:

The District of Mission believes in open, accessible and accountable local government. Council encourages residents to attend Council Meetings and further welcomes the public to participate in the Council meeting public processes as a means of hearing from the community. Regular Council meetings are held the first and third Monday of each month and where the scheduled Monday is a statutory holiday the meeting takes place on the Tuesday. A Question and Answer Period is scheduled at the end of each Council meeting and it is intended to be used by the public for the purposes of expressing their voice directly to Council in assembly. This protocol policy provides general rules around Question and Answer Period so that the benefits of this public engagement opportunity are maximized.

PURPOSE:

This policy will:

- a) Establish a framework for the conduct of Question and Answer Period during Council meetings;
- b) Set out time limitations per speaker to ensure no one person dominates a particular Question and Answer Period;
- c) Set out reasonable time limitations on Question and Answer Period to ensure a balanced and efficient agenda;
- d) Guide orderly and courteous dialogue between Council and the public; and
- e) Promote transparency, accessibility and accountability of Council to the public.

POLICY:

1. Open Question and Answer Period Framework and Time Limitations:

- a. The Question and Answer Period will commence after all items on the regular Council meeting are concluded;
- b. A fifteen minute Question and Answer Period opportunity will be provided at the end of each meeting at which time members of the public will have up to three minutes each to ask Council questions about any matter;
- c. Questions may be asked of any Council member, but must be directed through the Mayor or otherwise the Chair of the meeting;
- d. Any Council member or staff member may reply by going through the Chair if s/he feels s/he has something to contribute; and,
- e. Council reserves the right to defer responding to a particular question in order to obtain the information required to provide a comprehensive and accurate response.

2. Question and Answer Period – Listening and Courteous Dialogue:

The main function of the Question and Answer Period is to provide an opportunity for the public to have a voice and to be heard. The Council members' role is to listen to the questions of the public and provide a response. The response could take place immediately or may require further research and a subsequent answering. To aid in Council's role to listen and respond, respect for order and decorum are essential. Hence the rules of procedure for an assembly will be required throughout the Question and Answer Period.

3. Question and Answer Period – Promote Transparency, Accessibility and Accountability

As Question and Answer Period is televised, it promotes transparency and helps hold the local government accountable for its actions. It is an opportunity for the public to engage into a question and answer dialogue with their Council representatives on any matter of interest and/or concern. The only required restrictions may relate to land, labour and/or legal issues including those matters that are the subject of a closed public hearing. Otherwise Council is available to open dialogue, to the exploration of resolutions to problems and they are accessible on all other matters brought to their attention by the public.

***** END OF POLICY *****

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS/REVIEW

<u>Policy #</u>	<u>Date Adopted</u>	<u>Date Reviewed</u>	<u>Amended (Y/N)</u>	<u>Date Reissued</u>	<u>Authority (Resolution #)</u>