

Design of the Official Flag of the City of Toronto

(City Council on November 23, 24 and 25, 1999, amended this Clause by:

- (1) *striking out all of the words after the words “City of Toronto” in the recommendation of the Administration Committee, so that such recommendation shall now read as follows:*

“The Administration Committee recommends that the flag of the former City of Toronto be the official flag of the new City of Toronto.”; and

- (2) *adding thereto the following:*

“It is further recommended that:

- (a) *flag design A1, by Mr. Rene DeSantis, being the original City of Toronto flag, be the official flag of the new City of Toronto; and*
- (b) *the flag design approved by City Council as the official City of Toronto flag be subject to the designer agreeing, in a manner satisfactory to the City Solicitor, to forfeit all rights to the design to the City of Toronto.”)*

The Administration Committee recommends that the flag of the former City of Toronto be the official flag of the new City of Toronto subject to the creator of the flag of the former City of Toronto being given an opportunity to re-design the flag, if he so chooses, to make improvements.

The Administration Committee submits the following report (October 18, 1999) from the City Clerk:

Purpose:

To approve a design for the official flag of Toronto.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The cost of organizing the design submission process has been absorbed within the existing Protocol budget. The cost of producing the new flag, once approved by Council, will be borne by the individual Departments as part of the operating budget process.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Administration Committee recommend to City Council design A as the official flag of Toronto;

- (2) City Purchasing and Materials Management Division be instructed to source a supplier for the official flag in order that all City Departments, Agencies, Boards and Commissions receive the benefits of consistent quality and best possible price through the bulk purchasing of the flag; and
- (3) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

The Administration Committee at its meeting on September 7, 1999, had before it a report (August 16, 1999) from the City Clerk, recommending that:

- (1) the Administration Committee recommend to Council a design for the official flag of Toronto from the four designs submitted.

The Administration Committee:

- (1) referred the aforementioned report back to the City Clerk; and
- (2) directed that the issue of the design for the official flag of Toronto be referred to the Creative Services, Unit, Corporate Communications Division, Corporate Services Department, with a request that consultations be held with interested Members of Council and that a report be submitted to the Administration Committee in regard thereto, such report to include more than four designs for consideration by the Administration Committee.

Comments:

As a result of the direction from the Administration Committee, the Creative Services Unit and the Protocol Unit invited all Councillors to attend one of two meetings to discuss what design elements should be included in the official flag. Mr. Paul MacLean, an external facilitator, conducted the sessions. Few Councillors attended, but there was valuable input gained from the meetings. Mr. MacLean developed a questionnaire based on the discussions with the Councillors and staff. It was distributed to each Councillor to complete. Twenty-five Councillors completed the questionnaire and three declined to participate. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

From the results of the questionnaire, the following design profile was created:

“Designers are asked to create a unique, simple and visually striking flag. The design should be marketable and reproducible by children.

The flag should contain one or more symbols and these should be easily decoded and should refer to Toronto. When seeking more specific guidance about the symbols we found that, amongst the suggestions we made, a reference to Toronto's history (such as a meeting place) evoked the most positive response (about half way between somewhat important and of little importance). Much less positive responses (in decreasing order) were given to symbols which were future oriented, traditional (e.g., Coat of arms), referred to Canadian context, Toronto's skyline, the world context (e.g., multicultural city) and nature. These elements would achieve lukewarm support at best, and may even be rejected. They scored slightly better than "of little importance." (One comment indicated a visceral reaction to any reference to the monarchy this would have to be taken into account if a designer were to use traditional symbols such as the Coat of Arms). A very negative response was given to the Ontario context.

In summary, we can say that a strong preference will be given to designs that are unique, simple and visually striking. The choice of symbols will play much less of a role in the decision about which design to choose.

There is a strong preference for a two colour flag, and likewise a strong preference that the dominant colour be blue.

The primary audience for the flag and the people whom we wish to identify with the flag is the citizens of Toronto."

The designs were submitted to the Creative Services Unit of Corporate Services, and reviewed by a cross section of City staff from different Departments using the design profile described above. Staff is of the opinion that design A best meets the design profile. There are four additional designs (B, C, D, E, and F) for the Committee to choose from, if design A is not selected. A copy of each of the designs will be distributed to all Councillors as soon as they are available.

Once the design for the flag is determined, a single corporate supplier for the official City flag should be determined by the Finance Department, Purchasing and Materials Management Division through a competitive bidding process. This would give the City's Departments, Agencies, Boards and Commissions the benefits of bulk purchasing consistent quality and lowest price. All Department, Agencies, Boards and Commissions should be instructed to use the corporate supplier for flags.

Conclusions:

Unlike the Coat of Arms or even the City of Toronto logo, the official flag of Toronto will become widely known once it is in the public domain. The flag will be flown in many prominent locations such as tourist attractions, hotels and public buildings as well as at City owned facilities, such the City Hall and Civic Centres, in parks, and on emergency services buildings. The citizens of Toronto will take great pride in a flag that is simple and striking. As soon as the flag design is approved by Council, staff will make arrangements to have it launched as soon as it can be produced.

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The Administration Committee also submits the following communication (November 2, 1999) from Councillor Olivia Chow, Downtown:

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the City invite children and youth to submit designs for a City of Toronto flag for children and youth.

Background:

The City encourages children and young people to engage in the civic life through their creativity. While there is discussion about an official flag, this is a good time to invite children and youth to submit designs for a “children and youth” flag that is reflective of the childcentred approach the City has adopted.

The Children Services staff have been briefed about this initiative and are in support of it. Details of the jury can be worked out later.

The following persons appeared before the Administration Committee in connection with the foregoing matter:

- Mr. Rene DeSantis, creator of the official flag of the former City of Toronto;
- Mr. Tom Myint, and submitted his design of the official flag for the City of Toronto;

- Councillor Olivia Chow, Downtown;

- Councillor Sherene Shaw, Scarborough Agincourt; and

- Councillor Frances Nunziata, York Humber.

(Copies of the flag designs and the City of Toronto Flag Design Questionnaire were forwarded to all Members of Council with the November 2, 1999, agenda of the Administration Committee and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

(City Council on November 23, 24 and 25, 1999, had before it, during consideration of the foregoing Clause, the following communication (November 23, 1999) from the Chair of the Community Services Committee:

Further to requests from a number of Members of Council, I am putting forward the flag design on the reverse of this page for consideration.

You may recall that this design was put forward at the previous Council Meeting when this item was considered. While there appeared to be some support for it at the time, it was not voted on as Council decided to hold a contest for the flag design instead.

This flag represents a simple, yet eye-catching design that I believe would do the City of Toronto proud now and into the foreseeable future.

While it was not my original intent to put it forward again, following discussions with a number of Councillors who were less than pleased with the design recommended by Committee, I thought it worthwhile to provide an alternative for Council's consideration.)

(A copy of the flag design, referred to in the foregoing communication, is on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

(City Council also had before it, during consideration of the foregoing Clause, the following communications:

- (i) (November 19, 1999) from Mr. Paul Kipin, submitting a proposed design for the flag of the City of Toronto; and*
- (ii) (November 16, 1999) from Mr. Rene DeSantis, President Montana Steele Advertising, submitting, as requested by the Administration Committee, variations of the original design of the City of Toronto Flag.)*