
City Council

Notice of Motion

MM19.1	ACTION			Ward:27
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Restoring Respect to City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square - by Councillor Vincent Crisanti, seconded by Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Government Management Committee. A two thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Vincent Crisanti, seconded by Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Chief Corporate Officer to undertake a review of all facilities and maintenance practices for Toronto City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square and identify steps to ensure the property is kept in a respectable state of cleanliness and repair.
2. City Council direct the Chief Corporate Officer to incorporate as part of the review:
 - a. how comparable historic municipal buildings and public squares are maintained in other jurisdictions; and
 - b. options for street furniture elements to better match the design of City Hall.

Summary

Toronto City Hall is the seat of Canada's sixth-largest government. The surrounding property, including Nathan Phillips Square, is our City's most significant and prestigious public space. The City Hall building itself is one of Canada's most remarkable pieces of architecture and one of the world's most significant municipal buildings.

Unfortunately, the state to which Toronto City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square are cared for is well below standard. As a government, we invest millions in municipal licensing enforcement to ensure private citizens keep aesthetically pleasing properties. We employ professional planners and urban designers to ensure properties meet certain standards. Yet in the case of our own headquarters, we are unable to lead by example.

The area at the southeast corner of Nathan Phillips Square is a trampled mud field. Old bicycles are chained to our rusty fences. Cigarette butts litter the ground. Riot barriers are stacked either in open view or clumsily tucked in under the walkway that leads to the green roof.

The wire mesh garbage and recycling bins do not actually hide the garbage; they display it to anybody walking by. Barriers have been placed in front of the arches over the pool in Nathan Phillips Square as a makeshift deterrent to people climbing up the arches. In short, this does not look like an inviting place to be.

Inside City Hall, there are signs and stickers plastered seemingly in every corner warning people not to smoke or take a dog inside, the portable risers are stored in one corner of the rotunda and the building's beautiful teak has been scratched, buffed and chipped in many places.

This is inexcusable. Toronto City Hall is a work of art and the property surrounding it is a treasure for all Torontonians. We must begin to treat it that way.

(Submitted to City Council on March 5 and 6, 2012, as MM19.1)