



## REPORT FOR ACTION

### Enabling Remote Electronic Participation in Toronto Zoo Board Meetings During an Emergency

**Date:** May 13, 2020  
**To:** Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo  
**From:** City Clerk  
**Wards:** All

#### SUMMARY

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The purpose of this report is to recommend amendments to the procedures by-law of the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo to allow electronic participation by members of the Board in meetings held during an emergency declared to exist in all or part of the City under section 4 or 7.0.1 of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The City Clerk recommends that the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo:

1. Amend By-law 1-2009 to provide that during an emergency declared to exist in all or part of the City under section 4 or 7.0.1 of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*:
  - a. a member of the Board or its Committees may participate in a meeting by electronic means and will be counted in determining whether or not a quorum of members is present at any point in time; and
  - b. a member of the Board or its Committees may participate electronically in a meeting that is closed to the public.

#### FINANCIAL IMPACT

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The City Clerk will work with the Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Zoo to identify any financial impacts in excess of what has been approved in the 2020 budget.

## DECISION HISTORY

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At its meeting on April 12 and 13, 2011, City Council adopted 2011.EX4.6, and in so doing, directed that City Council approve the board by-laws of all agencies that regulate the internal conduct of the business and affairs of the agency, including the procedures by-law for the Toronto Zoo Board.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.EX4.6>

At its meeting on April 30, 2020, City Council adopted Item 2020.CC20.1 as amended, and in so doing, authorized local boards of the City to amend their own procedures to permit electronic participation in meetings during emergencies, without the need for further Council approval.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CC20.1>

## COMMENTS

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### **COVID-19 measures in the City of Toronto limit public gatherings**

On March 17, 2020, the Premier of Ontario declared a state of emergency under section 7.0.1(1) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and prohibited organized public events in excess of 50 people. As of March 28, 2020, the Government of Ontario has further restricted organized public events to no more than 5 people.

As part of the City of Toronto's COVID-19 measures, the City closed all City buildings, including City Hall, to the public.

On March 23, 2020, an emergency was declared by the Mayor of the City of Toronto under section 4 of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, and section 59-5.1 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59, Emergency Management, due to the risk to the health of the residents of the City of Toronto arising from spread of COVID-19 and its presence within the City of Toronto.

Toronto's Medical Officer of Health is recommending physical distancing as a way to minimize COVID-19 transmission in the community. Physical distancing measures include:

- keeping 2 metres (6 feet) apart from others
- avoiding mass gatherings
- avoiding crowds.

These limitations on the assembly of people and the strong recommendations from health professionals and all orders of government that residents stay home and only go out for essential needs, present a challenge to holding legislative meetings in accordance with current procedures.

## **Conducting Board meetings using electronic participation during a provincial or municipal emergency**

On March 19, 2020 the Province passed the Municipal Emergency Act, 2020 (the "Act") <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/S20004>, amending the City of Toronto Act, 2006 to allow for remote participation in municipal council and local board meetings during a declared provincial and/or municipal emergency. The Act is available online at <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/S20004>.

The Act permits City Council, its local boards and committees of both to adopt procedural by-law amendments allowing Members to participate in open and closed meetings electronically and to be counted for quorum when doing so, during declared emergencies.

The Act also allows a local board to call and hold a special meeting in which electronic participation may be counted to determine quorum, for the purpose of amending its procedures by-law to incorporate the new electronic meeting rules during declared emergencies.

The current Board procedures require that notice of the proposed amendment or repeal be given in writing at the previous Board meeting. However, in light of the declared COVID-19 emergency, it is not possible to hold a regular meeting at which to give such notice. The Municipal Emergency Act, 2020 takes priority over the notice requirement in subsection 35(a) of the Board procedures and the Board is able to consider these amendments without having given prior notice.

As directed by City Council through adoption of Item 2011.EX4.6, City Council must approve the by-laws of all agencies that regulate the internal conduct of the business and affairs of the agency. However, at its meeting on April 30, 2020, City Council adopted Item CC20.1 as amended, and authorized local boards of the City to amend their own procedures to permit electronic participation during emergencies without the need for further Council approval.

Nothing in the Act changes the requirement for meetings to be open to the public including:

- Duty to give notice of meetings
- Requirement to meet in public
- Requirement to provide for public participation
- Limitations on closed sessions
- Requirement to start and end meetings in public
- Requirement to pass a motion stating the nature of the matter and the statutory exemption relied upon before closing a meeting to the public
- Prohibition on voting in closed session
- Prohibition on secret balloting.

While the Board may need to attend to pressing business during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board must also be mindful of the health and safety of its members, staff

and members of the public and must comply with Provincial orders. If approved, the recommendations in this report amend the Board's procedure by-law to permit the Board to hold a meeting during which all Board members can participate electronically, during a declared emergency and in accordance with the Act.

To ensure that Board meetings remain open to the public in accordance with the requirements described above, the following describes the steps the Board is taking to ensure transparency and openness while respecting Provincial orders and the recommendations of health experts and authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Proposed operations for electronic meetings**

The City Clerk is prepared to support meetings of the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo held by electronic means. In order to reduce the pressure on staff and technology resources, the Clerk strongly recommends that during a declared emergency, all business be transacted by the Board, and that Committee meetings be suspended.

Members of the Board, Zoo Officials and City Officials including the Clerk, and registered public speakers will use the City's WebEx conference technology as the means of electronic participation. In order to ensure that meetings of the Board continue to be open to the public, open sessions will be streamed live to YouTube so that the public may observe the meeting. The Clerk will include the URL for the meeting as part of the notice of meeting.

Members of the public may register to speak to the Board on any agenda item no later than three business days preceding the date and time of the meeting, in accordance with subsection 29(2) of the Board procedures.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Clerk or the Chair will call the roll to confirm that quorum is present and identify all Members present.

During the meeting, the Chair will ask each Member if they wish to ask questions of staff or wish to speak, in an order of the Chair's choosing, so long as each Member has had an opportunity to question or speak before a second round begins.

Members, and Zoo Officials and City Officials are requested to state their name prior to speaking, for the benefit of all meeting participants and observers.

Members are able to provide draft motions to the Clerk and seek drafting assistance via e-mail. Members are requested to read their motions aloud when placing them.

The Chair will ask the Clerk to repeat each motion and any staff recommendations prior to taking the vote.

Every vote taken will be recorded vote.

If the meeting needs to resolve into closed session, Members and Officials are responsible for ensuring that no other persons see or hear any of the confidential

deliberations taking place. The Clerk will disconnect the input to the live-stream and remove any registered public speakers from the closed session. Ensuring the confidentiality of a closed session may result in brief delays in the meeting.

If a Member's connection to the meeting becomes disconnected, the Clerk may recommend to the Chair that a brief recess be taken to re-establish connection. If quorum is lost as a result of disconnections, the meeting will be in recess until the Clerk can confirm that a quorum has been regained. If a quorum cannot be regained after all reasonable efforts have been made, the Clerk will advise Members of the time that the meeting was adjourned and any remaining business will be carried over to a future meeting.

As the special meeting on May 25, 2020 will be the first time that a Zoo Board meeting is held using remote electronic participation, the City Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Zoo, may refine and propose alternate options for meeting operations which can be implemented at future meetings that are held during a declared emergency.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - Draft by-law to amend By-law No. 1-2009 to enable remote electronic participation in board meetings during an emergency