

Making Electronic Participation Permanent for the Sign Variance Committee

Date: June 14, 2023

To: Sign Variance Committee

From: City Clerk

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to recommend amendments to the Sign Variance Committee Procedural By-Law to make electronic participation a permanent option for meetings, and modify provisions concerning the time to achieve quorum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Clerk recommends that the Sign Variance Committee:

1. Amend the Sign Variance Committee By-Law No. 1, Rules of Procedure for the Sign Variance Committee, by adopting a by-law in the form or substantially in the form, attached as Attachment 1 to the report (June 14, 2023) from the City Clerk to:

- a. repeal and re-enact the various amendments previously adopted concerning electronic participation in all meetings; and
- b. Allow 30 minutes instead of 15 minutes to achieve quorum.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact associated with the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of March 29, 30 and 31, 2023, City Council adopted Item EX3.7, and in so doing has authorized local boards governed by the City of Toronto Act, 2006, to amend their own rules of procedure to permit electronic participation by board members and the public, and to change the time required to achieve quorum from 15 minutes to 30 minutes, and authorize such boards to continue to meet electronically in accordance with the previously adopted electronic participation rules past the May 9, 2023 deadline until they can meet to consider procedural amendments.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX3.7>

At its meeting on August 5, 2020, The Sign Variance Committee enacted By-law No. 4 in revised Attachment 1 to the supplementary report (August 4, 2020) from the City Clerk, being a by-law to amend Sign Variance Committee By-law No. 1. The Sign Variance Committee also adopted the electronic hearing requirements and operational guidelines in Attachment 2 to the report (July 28, 2020) from the City Clerk.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.SB7.1>

In July 2020 the Provincial government introduced Bill 197, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020. Among other things, it amends the meeting rules of the City of Toronto Act including electronic participation. It makes similar amendments to the Municipal Act so that these rules apply to every Ontario municipality

<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-1/bill-197>

On July 28 and 29, 2020 City Council extended the electronic participation rules applicable only during a declared emergency contained in Municipal Code Chapter 27, Council Procedures, for a period of one year following the later of the termination of the Provincial emergency or the termination of the municipal emergency.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.EX15.21>

The municipal emergency was terminated on May 9, 2022, after the Provincial emergency had been terminated.

COMMENTS

Electronic Participation in Sign Variance Committee Meetings

Since May 2020, the Sign Variance Committee has permitted electronic participation at its meetings. This began as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and has been a success.

The public has expressed that having the option to participate remotely allows for improved access and mitigates issues around childcare, time off work and other factors that may have previously limited their ability to attend a meeting in person. This meeting model allows the public to choose how they wish to address the Committee, encouraging participation and increasing accessibility.

Previously, at its meeting on August 5, 2020, the Sign Variance Committee amended the Rules of Procedure for the Sign Variance Committee (Sign Variance Committee By-law No. 1). At its meeting of March 29, 30 and 31, 2023, City Council adopted Item EX3.7, and in so doing has authorized local boards governed by the City of Toronto Act, 2006, to amend their own rules of procedure to permit electronic participation by board members and the public, and to change the time required to achieve quorum from 15 minutes to 30 minutes, and authorize such boards to continue to meet electronically in accordance with the previously adopted electronic participation rules past the May 9, 2023 deadline until they can meet to consider procedural amendments. This report proposes further amendments to the Rules of Procedure for the Sign Variance Committee (Sign Variance Committee By-law No. 1) to establish the previous amendments with respect to electronic meetings as a permanent option, and to provide for 30 minutes rather than 15 minutes after the time set for the beginning of the meeting for the Sign Variance Committee to achieve quorum.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

John D. Elvidge
City Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Amendments to the Sign Variance Committee By-Law No. 1