

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM29.15	ACTION			Ward: All
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Improving Public Consultation Meetings for Communities - by Mayor Olivia Chow, seconded by Councillor Frances Nunziata

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Mayor Olivia Chow, seconded by Councillor Frances Nunziata, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the City Manager to hold in-person any public consultation or meeting that is planned to be hosted remotely when requested to do so in writing by:

- a. the local Councillor, if the matter relates only to the ward represented by that Councillor; or
- b. the Mayor, if the matter relates to more than one ward.

Summary

During the pandemic, the City of Toronto developed the capacity to hold public meetings and consultations remotely through videoconferencing technology. This technology continues to be used to hold many public meetings exclusively online. While online meetings can have many advantages, being present in the same room as the presenters and interested participants is important in certain circumstances. For example, being present in the same space may help neighbours build trust and understanding between one another and City representatives, digest complex information more effectively, feel more welcome to ask questions and interact with decision-makers, and serve a community's preferences.

In 2024, the City of Toronto adopted a policy that allows Members of Council to request any internal meeting with City staff be held in-person. Following that precedent, this motion recommends that Council direct the City Manager to hold any consultation that is proposed to be conducted through a videoconferencing platform in person if requested by a Member of Council. To ensure the City Manager is able to act on clear direction, this motion recommends that Councillors can provide this direction for consultations on matters that relate to their Ward, while the Mayor can provide direction on consultations related to multiple wards or all wards.

This change ensures that public consultations and meetings are responsive to the unique needs of the communities participating in each consultation.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM29.15