

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VAUGHAN

CORPORATE POLICY

POLICY TITLE: COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETING SAFETY

POLICY NO.: 06.C.04

Section:	Council & Committees		
Effective Date:	November 19, 2024	Date of Last Review:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Approval Authority:	Policy Owner:		
Council	DCM, Strategic Initiatives		

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Vaughan is committed to supporting public participation at Council and Committee Meetings and welcomes debate of public matters in a safe and welcoming environment based on principles of respect, accountability, dedication, integrity and inclusiveness.

PURPOSE

This policy establishes the roles, responsibilities and measures for the City to effectively manage and deliver Safety and security for all Meeting Participants.

This policy emphasizes open communication, professionalism, respect and adherence to laws, while also outlining potential disciplinary action for violations. This is done via a focus on both education for the public and support in responding to breaches.

1) Education

- a) Provides guidance regarding the City's expectations of appropriate Meeting conduct and how the City is providing a safe Meeting environment.
- b) Builds awareness and understanding of the City's standards, as it defines what conduct negatively impacts the Safety, well-being and rights of its Meeting Participants.
- c) Outlines the City's commitment to Council and Committee Meeting Safety that takes a position of education and support rather than punitive to promote an understanding of standards and expectations.

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2) Support

- a) Ensures that the City is committed to responding to breaches of this policy and to ensure that all Meeting Participants are treated and interacted with equitably and equally.

SCOPE

This policy applies to any Council or Committee Meeting that is conducted, either in person or by electronic participation, and applies to Members of Council, Staff, residents and Meeting Participants.

This policy does not apply to or include community events, offsite tours, private events or town halls.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- 1) *Criminal Code*, RSC 1985, c C-46.
- 2) *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, s 7, Part 1 of The Constitution Act, 1982, Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c11.
- 3) *Human Rights Code*, RSO 1990, c H19.
- 4) *Municipal Act, 2001*, SO 2001, c. 25.
- 5) *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, RSO 1990, c O1.
- 6) *Trespass to Property Act*, RSO 1990, c T.21.

DEFINITIONS

- 1) **City:** The Corporation of the City of Vaughan.
- 2) **City Clerk:** A statutory officer of the Corporation as prescribed by s. 228(1) of the *Municipal Act*, or their designate.
- 3) **Committee:** Per the City's Procedure By-law, a Committee includes Committee of the Whole, Committee of the Whole (Closed Session), Committee of the Whole (Public Hearing), a Statutory Committee, an Ad Hoc Committee, or a Sub-Committee.
- 4) **Communications:** Correspondence received from interested parties to an item on a Council or Committee agenda.

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- 5) Corporate Security:** The Corporate Security section of the Facility Management Department. For the purpose of this Policy, reference to Corporate Security shall include Staff and/or contractors retained by Corporate Security to execute the functions of Corporate Security as contained in this Policy.
- 6) Council Secretariat Staff:** Staff employed within the Council Secretariat division of the Office of the City Clerk.
- 7) Incident:** Any occurrence involving an event that is outside the normal conduct or decorum of a Council or Committee Meeting.
- 8) Meeting:** Any regular, special or other meeting of Council or Committee, or a local board or its committee, held in person and/or electronically, where:
 1. A quorum of the Council or Committee members is present; and
 2. The members discuss or otherwise deal with any matter in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of the Council or Committee, local board or its committee.
- 9) Meeting Chair:** The person presiding at a Council or a Committee Meeting.
- 10) Meeting Participants:** Any individual who either physically or electronically participates in, or attends, a Meeting, including but not limited to, Members of Council, Staff, appointed Meeting members or members of the public.
- 11) Member of Council/Council:** A person currently elected or appointed to hold office on City Council.
- 12) Procedure By-law:** The City's Procedure by By-law 7-2011, as amended or superseded.
- 13) Prohibited Items:** Anything used, designed to be used or intended for use to cause injury or death or display threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- 14) Requests to Speak (Deputations):** An oral submission made by a member of the public which may be supported by written material.
- 15) Safety:** The state in which hazards and conditions leading to physical, psychological or material harm are controlled in order to preserve the health and well-being of Meeting Participants and the community.
- 16) Security Incident:** Any situation affecting the conduct, decorum or Safety of a Meeting that potentially threatens, or does threaten, Meeting Participants by causing physical, mental or emotional harm.

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17) Staff: An employee of the City and for the purposes of this policy, “Staff” includes volunteers retained by the City.

18) Trespass Notice: A notice pursuant to the *Trespass to Property Act* that is authorized to be given prohibiting entry to one or more City Facility.

POLICY

1) COMMITMENT

The City of Vaughan’s policy on Meeting Safety is guided by principles that protect the rights and responsibilities of all Meeting Participants with the ultimate objective of supporting the democratic process through access and participation, while providing a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment. As such, the City of Vaughan is committed to:

a) Mutual Respect and Dignity

Meeting Participants have the right to, and responsibility for, contributing to a democratic environment of mutual respect where the dignity of all Meeting Participants of the City of Vaughan is valued.

b) Freedom of Dialogue and Assembly

The City of Vaughan values freedom of speech and supports peaceful assemblies, demonstrations and lawful protest, in accordance with the law.

c) Collaboration and Fair Process

The City of Vaughan will work collaboratively to resolve Meeting disruptions where possible. Disruptions will be handled in a fair and equitable manner adherent to principles of procedural fairness and the promotion of civic participation.

2) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a) City Clerk

i) In accordance with the Procedure By-law, the City Clerk is responsible for providing advice regarding Meeting procedures and advising on effective governance in accordance with the principles set out in the by-law.

ii) In addition to the roles and responsibilities as set out in the Procedure By-law, the City Clerk will:

- (1) Uphold the principles of this policy;
- (2) Ensure that relevant Council Secretariat Staff supporting a Meeting are familiar with their roles and responsibilities and are aware of how and when to contact Corporate Security in accordance with this policy;
- (3) Coordinate the presence of Corporate Security;
- (4) Ensure that all potential Security Incidents or potential threats to Meeting Participant Safety are promptly reported to Corporate Security;
- (5) With the assistance of Corporate Security, take all reasonable, practical and safe measures to mitigate potential Security Incidents; and
- (6) Act on the basis of procedural fairness and promotion of civic participation, while ensuring the Safety of all Meeting Participants.

b) Meeting Chair

- i) In accordance with the Procedure By-law, the Meeting Chair is responsible for:
 - (1) Presiding over the Meeting impartially in accordance with the Procedure By-law's rules and principles; and
 - (2) Enforcing the observance of order and decorum among all Meeting Participants.
- ii) In accordance with the Procedure Bylaw, the Meeting Chair may expel or exclude from the Meeting, any person, who, in the opinion of the Meeting Chair, has behaved improperly under the principles and rules of the by-law.
- iii) In addition to the roles and responsibilities as set out in the Procedure By-law, the Meeting Chair will:
 - (1) Enforce the City's Procedure By-law;
 - (2) Uphold the principles of this policy;
 - (3) Are familiar with their roles and responsibilities and are aware of how and when to contact Corporate Security in accordance with this policy;
 - (4) With the assistance of Corporate Security, take all reasonable, practical and safe measures to mitigate potential Security Incidents; and

(5) Act on the basis of procedural fairness.

c) Council Secretariat Staff

- i) Will provide the City Clerk with Meeting information, to allow for the City Clerk to make the determination for the presence of Corporate Security;
- ii) Are familiar with their roles and responsibilities and are aware of how and when to contact Corporate Security in accordance with this policy; and
- iii) Ensure that all potential Security Incidents or potential threats to Meeting Participants Safety are promptly reported to the Meeting Chair, City Clerk and/or Corporate Security.

d) Audio Visual

- i) Audio-visual Staff will cease audio-visual broadcasting at the request of the Meeting Chair or the City Clerk, should a Security Incident arise.

e) Corporate Security

Corporate Security will:

- i) Allocate sufficient Corporate Security staff and other resources to Meetings as determined in section 5;
- ii) Conduct and manage applicable Security Incidents, investigations, in accordance with this Policy, and act as a liaison with law enforcement as required; and
- iii) Maintain the utmost professionalism, customer service and confidentiality when interacting with Meeting Participants.

f) Other City Departments

- i) Should Staff in other departments become aware of the potential of increased participation or attendance of a Meeting, the Staff will provide notification to the City Clerk, who can request security presence from Corporate Security.

3) UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR AND PROHIBITED ITEMS

- a) In addition to complying with all applicable laws, Meeting Participants shall conduct themselves in a manner that supports an environment in which civility, respect, inclusiveness and opportunity are valued.

- b) No Meeting Participants shall conduct themselves in a manner that:
 - i) Causes a disturbance that impedes on the undertaking or orderly conduct of the Meeting;
 - ii) Tries to discourage any Meeting Participant(s) proper participation including direct or indirect intervention (e.g. through coercion, intimidation, threats or social pressure);
 - iii) Engages in verbal or non-verbal behaviour or communication toward any Meeting Participant(s) and/or group that is intimidating, degrading, harassing and/or discriminatory or in a manner that exceeds the bounds of freedom of expression;
 - iv) Engages in actions which are threatening, abusive and/or compromise the Safety and security of any Meeting Participant(s) and/or group; and/or
 - v) Is otherwise contrary to the City's Public Code of Meeting Conduct policy.
- c) In the course of the Meeting, no participant shall possess or use any hazardous material, explosive substance or weapon, including any item that can be reasonably perceived to be a weapon by others (e.g. replica gun, airsoft gun, bb gun).

4) CORPORATE SECURITY PRESENCE

- a) In fulfilling on the commitment of a safe and welcoming environment at Meetings, Corporate Security will do their best to keep their visual presence to a minimum so as to not intimidate, interfere with, or deter Meeting Participants from participating in the Meeting in accordance with the Procedure By-law or this and other applicable policies. Corporate Security will function in a support/response capacity only.
- b) Corporate Security will be readily available and responsive for Meetings in accordance with this Policy.

5) DETERMINATION OF CORPORATE SECURITY PRESENCE CRITERIA

- a) The Office of the City Clerk will do its best to anticipate the need for and amount of Corporate Security presence. Determining the need and presence of Security Staff will take into consideration:
 - i) Number of received Communications;
 - ii) Number of received Requests to Speak (deputations);

- iii) Information received by the City Clerk that there may be an increased Meeting participation or attendance;
- iv) Receipt of any Communication or materials about the Meeting that are considered to be threatening, aggressive or abusive as determined by the City Clerk.

6) COMPLIANCE AND SAFETY RESPONSE

The City is committed to undertaking all reasonable attempts and remedial actions to safely de-escalate Security Incidents to ensure the ongoing Safety and participation of its Meeting Participants. Should the Security Incident be deemed to cause or potentially cause immediate danger, Corporate Security, senior officials and/or senior Staff shall request the support of local police services.

- a) In the event that any Meeting Participant(s) conducts themselves in a manner not keeping in proper decorum or exhibits unreasonable behaviour or possess a Prohibited Item, the following steps will be taken:
 - i) If a Meeting Participant(s) is deemed to be disruptive by the Meeting Chair, the Meeting Chair shall request the Meeting Participant(s) to stop the unreasonable behaviour.
 - ii) In the event that the unreasonable behaviour continues, the Meeting Chair may request that Corporate Security request the person to stop being disruptive.
 - iii) When advised by Corporate Security that the unreasonable behaviour is continuing, or if the Meeting Chair deems the Meeting Participant(s) to exhibit improper conduct, the Meeting Chair may expel any person(s) for improper conduct at a Meeting.
 - iv) If the decision is made to expel the Meeting Participant(s) from the Meeting, Corporate Security will request the Meeting Participant(s) to leave the Meeting. Or in the case of electronic participation, the Meeting Participant(s) may be removed from the meeting room at the direction of the Meeting Chair and will be denied re-entry to the Meeting.
 - v) Should the Meeting Participant(s) refuse to leave the Meeting, or if the City Clerk or Corporate Security deem necessary, police will be contacted for assistance.
 - vi) Notwithstanding the above, at any point when a disruption or unreasonable behaviour by a Meeting Participant(s) is deemed to be a source of

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immediate danger, the Meeting Chair, City Clerk, and/or Corporate Security may request the assistance of the police.

vii) Should a Meeting Participant(s) be expelled from a Meeting, the City reserves the right to issue a Trespass to Property Notice in accordance with the *Trespass to Property Act*.

viii) The City recognizes that situations may arise that are not specifically identified in this policy, but still raise concerns for the Safety of those participating in a Meeting. In such cases, the City reserves the right to use efforts as it deems appropriate to ensure the Safety of its Meeting Participants. This may include, but not limited to, the Meeting Chair calling for an immediate recess of a Meeting.

(1) Should a Meeting be recessed, the meeting room will be cleared of all Meeting Participants by Corporate Security. All electronic participation will be terminated.

(2) The City may issue a Trespass to Property Notice to any Meeting Participant(s) who refuse to vacate the Meeting at the request of Corporate Security or the police.

(3) If a Meeting is recessed, the City may reconvene again in accordance with the *Municipal Act* and City's Procedure By-law.

ADMINISTRATION

Administered by the Office of the City Clerk.

Review Schedule:	3 Years If other, specify here	Next Review Date:	November 19, 2027
Related Policy(ies):	13.C.01 – Respectful Workplace, 13.C.03 – Workplace Violence, 06.C.05 – Public Code of Meeting Conduct		
Related By-Law(s):	7-2011 – Procedure By-law (as amended)		
Procedural Document:			

Revision History

Date:	Description:
19-Nov-24	Approved at Council. Report No. 39 Item No. 17

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