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Flag of the United States of America in Newmarket Facilities

Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2025-17

Department(s): Community Services Commission

Author(s): Jeff Payne, Commissioner, Community Services

Meeting Date: April 7, 2025

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Flag of the United States of America in Newmarket Facilities dated April 7, 2025 be received; and,
2. That the flag of the United States of America no longer be displayed at all times in Newmarket recreation facilities, namely at ice pads (rinks); and,
3. That any request(s) outside of the Municipal Flag Policy and the Proclamation, Lighting and Community Flag Raising Request Policy to officially display an international flag in a place of prominence, at a Newmarket facility be delegated to the Commissioner, Community Services or their designate for review and approval; and,
4. That Delegation By-law 2016-17 be amended to reflect the delegation to the Commissioner, Community Services or their designate; and,
5. That staff be directed, where approval has been obtained, to only display the flag of a visiting international team or individual athlete at times and locations where the international tournament or competition is hosted; and,
6. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Council a change in practice regarding the display of the flag of the United States of America (USA) in Newmarket facilities. The

flag of the USA is the only international flag that is always displayed in Newmarket facilities at ice pads (rinks).

Background

The Town has received feedback from the community regarding the practice of always displaying the flag of the USA at Newmarket ice pads (rinks). The feedback from the community is linked to the current President of the USA and his administration regarding policies and statements that are concerning.

It has been a long-standing practice that the flag of Canada and the flag of the USA be displayed at all ice pads in Newmarket. This practice regarding the display of flags reflects the fact that Newmarket regularly hosts and has long welcomed international hockey tournaments, like Silver Sticks, to the community.

Discussion

The display of international flags at tournaments and athletic sport competition is common practice. Generally, the flag of a visiting country (or countries) is present in a facility for the period of the tournament or competition only, and it is not always left up beyond the sporting event.

Specific to hockey, it is common to see the flag of the USA at ice pads (rinks) across Canada and vice versa with the Canadian flag appearing in US arenas. This is reflective of the longstanding connection and the frequency with which teams have participated in cross-border play.

There is no requirement that Newmarket always display the flag of the USA as part of participating in the international tournaments that currently Newmarket hosts. For this reason, staff are recommending that Newmarket no longer display the flag of the USA outside of times when we are hosting a visiting team.

Further, staff are recommending that any request to officially display any international flag (in a place of prominence) within a Newmarket facility be approved by the Commissioner of Community Services going forward. This only applies to the display of a flag in an official capacity. This does not prevent any display of an international flag by participants or their supporters viewing a game or sporting event.

Consultation

Staff have reviewed information related to the tournaments that Newmarket hosts and information related to specific league play. Staff have advised local hockey association of the proposed change

Conclusion

Staff are recommending a change in practice that is responsive to community sentiment and that still appropriately recognizes visiting teams or athletes at times and locations where the international tournament or competition is hosted in Newmarket.

Council Priority Association

This report aligns with the following Council Priority: Diverse, Welcoming, and Inclusive Community

Human Resource Considerations

None

Budget Impact

None

Attachments

None

Approval for Submission

Ian McDougall, CAO

Report Contact

For more information on this report, Jeff Payne, Commissioner, Community Services info@newmarket.ca.