

DATE OF MEETING NOVEMBER 1, 2021

AUTHORED BY KAREN ROBERTSON, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

SUBJECT COUNCIL SEATING ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To formalize into policy the historical practice of Council seating arrangements at Council meetings.

Recommendation

That Council endorse the Council Seating Arrangements Policy as attached to the November 1, 2021 report by the Deputy City Clerk.

BACKGROUND

On July 12, 2021, staff presented the Governance and Priorities Committee with a list of policies for repeal that were either outdated, redundant, or no longer legal. At that same meeting staff also presented Council with a number of policies that needed to be amended or ones that have been treated as policies but were never formalized by Council.

One such practice that has been treated as a Council policy, but never formally considered by Council, is the process for determining the seating arrangements for Council members at Council meetings. As such, staff is bringing the practice forward as a Council policy for consideration (see Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION

Council members have been historically following the practice of having the Councillor with the longest continuous seniority sit in the first seat immediately to the right of the Mayor with the next senior Councillor positioned to the left of the Mayor and thereafter back-and-forth in order of service. In cases where two or more Councillors with the same length of service, the order is determined by alphabetic order. Although this practice has been followed for several years, and treated as a Council policy, it has never been formally endorsed by Council.

The policy before Council would put into policy the practice that has been followed for several years and would also provide clarity for future Councils. Despite the order outlined in the policy, there may be a valid reason for a Council member wishing to exchange seats with another Council member. In these instances, the request would be made to the Mayor and the decision to approve would be at their discretion based on the merits of the request.

OPTIONS

Option 1:

That Council endorse the Council Seating Arrangements Policy as attached to the November 1, 2021 report by the Deputy City Clerk.

- Selecting this option would formalize the process that has been historically followed by Council members for seating arrangements at Council meetings.

Option 2:

Council direction is sought.

- Council may wish to choose an alternate method of seat selection such as basing it on the highest numbers of votes received, alphabetical order, or leaving seat assignment to the Mayor. Should Council choose an alternate option to the one put forward by staff, direction would be sought on what the preferred process would be and staff would come back with a subsequent report and revised policy based on that direction.

SUMMARY POINTS

- On July 12, 2021, staff presented Council with a list of policies that needed to be amended or formalized.
- The guidelines for seating arrangements for Council members at Council meetings has been used as a guidelines for several years but never endorsed as a Council policy.
- Formalizing the guidelines into policy will provide clarity to future Councils on seating arrangements at Council meetings.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Council Seating Arrangements Policy

Submitted by:

Karen Robertson,
Deputy City Clerk

Concurrence by:

Sheila Gurrie,
Director of Legislative Services