

Corporate Services Policy	Section: Legislative Services
Policy: Petitions	Effective: November 7, 2023
Application: Residents/Council/Staff	Approved: November 7, 2023
Exclusion(s): N/A	By-law: N/A
Supercedes: Procedural By-law 49/2015	Resolution: 67/2023

Policy Statement

The Municipality of Port Hope is committed to citizen engagement and supports petitions as a tool for citizens to have input into Council's decision-making process.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to create processes in the Municipality of Port Hope for formally receiving and/or actioning electronic and paper-based petitions.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Municipality of Port Hope, Members of Council, interested stakeholders and citizens. This policy does not apply to advisory boards or committees of Council.

1 Definitions

- 1.1 Petition** means a formal request made to the Municipality of Port Hope Council for a particular action to be taken or to voice an opinion on a matter.
- 1.2 Petition Organizer** means the person who has initiated and is the main contact for the petition.

2 Responsibilities

- 2.1** It is the responsibility of Petition Organizers, Council and Staff to:
- Adhere to the guidelines and parameters established by this policy.
- 2.2** It is the responsibility of Municipal Clerk to:
- Administer this policy and provide for any related procedures as deemed necessary or in accordance with any related by-laws.

3 General Provisions

- 3.1** Petitions are a way for residents to communicate their opinions to members of Council and bring attention to a matter of public interest or concern that is within the authority of the Council.
- 3.2** Matters that are administrative or operational in nature should first be raised with Municipal Staff in the relevant department.
- 3.3** Anyone who is a resident, business owner, or property owner within the Municipality of Port Hope can bring forward and sign petitions.
- 3.4** All petitions are subject to the specific requirements outlined below, which help ensure their authenticity and validity.
- 3.5** This policy shall not limit any statutory petition process outlined in relevant legislation.

4 Petition Requirements

- 4.1** Petitions may be submitted in an electronic or paper-based format.
- 4.2** For convenience, the Office of the Clerk has created a form that the petition organizers can use (see Appendix A).
- 4.3** Other forms may be accepted, provided the following requirements are met:
- 4.3.1** Petitions must be addressed to the Council of the Municipality of Port Hope.
- 4.3.2** Petitions must request a particular action to be taken that is within the authority of Council. The petition request should be stated at the top of each page of the petition.

- 4.3.3** The petition organizer’s name and street address must be provided.
- 4.3.4** For paper-based petitions, each petitioner must provide their name, street address and original signature. Entries must be legible.
- 4.3.5** For electronic petitions, each petitioner must provide their name, street address and valid email address in place of the original signature.
- 4.3.6** The petition must clearly disclose on each page that it will be considered a public document at the Municipality of Port Hope and that information contained in it may be subject to the scrutiny of the Municipality and other members of the general public. Petitions that do not contain such a statement on each page will not be accepted.
- 4.3.7** Petitions containing defamatory or obscene content will not be accepted.
- 4.3.8** Petitions submitted via an external petition website (e.g. change.org) will not be accepted, at the discretion of the Mayor and Clerk. They may be placed on the Council Information Index for circulation to Members of Council.
- 4.3.9** It is the sole discretion of the Clerk as to whether the petition subject is appropriate for a public agenda, in accordance with the Procedure By-law.
- 4.3.10** If the Clerk determines that the petition is appropriate for a public agenda, it will be posted under “Correspondence”.

5 Submission Process

- 5.1** Paper-based petitions containing original signatures and meeting the requirements outlined in Section 4 should be sent via mail to Town Hall at the attention of the Office of the Clerk, or delivered in person to the Office of the Clerk at 56 Queen Street, Port Hope.
- 5.2** Electronic petitions meeting the requirements outlined in Section 4 should be emailed to clerk@porthope.ca
- 5.3** The Clerk will confirm receipt of the petition with the identified contact person.

6 Petitions Relating to an Agenda Item

- 6.1** Petitions relating to an item on an upcoming Council or Committee agenda will be included as part of the agenda package for the meeting where the item is being heard. If a petition is listed on a Committee of the Whole agenda, it will not be listed again on the following Council agenda, and vice versa.
- 6.2** The deadline to submit a petition in relation to an agenda item is noon (12:00 p.m.) on the Monday before the meeting. Petitions received by the deadline must adhere to the Petition Policy.

- 6.3** Petitions submitted after the deadline will not be accepted, and may become part of the Council Information Index, at the discretion of the Clerk.

7 Petitions Introducing New Business

- 7.1** Petitions that are introducing new business and are not related to an item on a current or upcoming agenda will be circulated as part of the Council Information Index.
- 7.2** Council Members may choose to lift such petitions and place them on a Committee of the Whole agenda for further consideration and discussion, in accordance with the Procedural By-law.
- 7.3** Petitions related to the same topic as a petition that has already been included in a Council Information Index or a Council/Committee agenda over the previous 12 months will not be accepted.

8 Monitoring/Contraventions

- 8.1** The Clerk will evaluate all petitions to ensure that the requirements of the policy are met. Petitions deemed to be in non-compliance may be redacted in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Petitions may also be withheld from a public agenda if the content is deemed inappropriate.

9 Retention and Disclosure

- 9.1** All petitions submitted to the Municipality will be retained by the Office of the Clerk. Petitions meeting the requirements of this policy will be kept on file in the Office of the Clerk and will be available for public viewing upon request.

Appendix A – Petition Form

How to Submit a Petition:

Paper-based petitions containing original signatures should be sent by mail or delivered in person to the following address during business hours:

Office of the Clerk
56 Queen Street
Port Hope, ON L1A 3Z9

Electronic petitions should be emailed to clerk@porthope.ca

To: Municipality of Port Hope Council

Petition Information: (Brief description of Petition)

Date: (Date of Submission)

Petition Subject Matter:

(Briefly state the subject matter of your petition and the request for action within the authority of Council.)

Total Number of Signatures:

Petition Organizer:

First and Last Name:

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

Telephone Number:

