



<b>Policy Name: Council Correspondence Policy</b>	<b>Policy No: S201-19</b>
Committee approval date:	April 15, 2019
Council approval date:	May 6, 2019
Revision date(s):	November 6, 2024
Department/Division:	Council

## 1. Purpose

1.1. This policy applies to all Correspondence received by the Town of Pelham addressed to Council requested to be included on the Council Agenda. The objective of this policy is to guarantee that all communication and Correspondence are managed efficiently, consistently, and respectfully.

## 2. Policy Statement

2.1. The Town of Pelham is dedicated to fostering community engagement and supports the inclusion of Correspondence on the Council agenda.

## 3. Application

3.1. This policy applies to all Correspondence received via direct mail, hand delivery, courier, facsimile, or electronic mail, including form requests and digital petitions.

3.2. This policy applies to Correspondence received for inclusion on a Council Agenda, a Public Meeting Agenda, and/or a Statutory or Advisory Committee Agenda.

3.3. The Town categorizes correspondence into two distinct streams: (1) residents and stakeholders, and (2) municipal corporations and other government entities. For more details on correspondence received from municipal corporations and other government entities, please refer to Section 7.

## 4. Definitions

“**Agenda**” means the order of business setting out the matters to be considered at a Meeting.

“**Clerk**” means the person appointed as Town Clerk of the Town of Pelham, or their designate.



**“Correspondence”** is any written communication received by direct mail, hand delivery, courier, facsimile, or electronic mail, including form requests and digital petitions. For greater clarity, correspondence excludes communication received through informal Social Media channels.

**“Council”** means the Town of Pelham’s elected representatives comprised of the Mayor, deputy mayor, and councillors.

**“Mayor”** means the head of Council for the Town of Pelham.

**“Meeting”** means any Meeting of Council, or of certain local boards or committees, where a quorum is present and where members discuss or otherwise deal with matters in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of the relevant body.

**“Public Meeting”** means a statutory Meeting of Council or Committee of Council that is open to the public.

**“Social Media”** refers to any websites, and applications that enable users to create and share content, participate in social networking or communications, create or participate in online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content.

**“Town of Pelham”** means The Corporation of the Town of Pelham.

## 5. General Communication

**5.1.** Correspondence shall be addressed to the Mayor and Council, to the attention of the Clerk.

**5.2.** Correspondence received through the mail and addressed to individual Members of Council at the Pelham Town Hall address will be opened, date stamped, and distributed through the Council mail bins. Members who do not wish this mail to be opened shall advise the Clerk in writing, wherein mail will be date stamped on the unopened envelope only and placed in the Council mail bin(s). Envelopes marked “private”, “personal” or “confidential” shall not be opened but will be date stamped on the envelope and placed in the Council mail bin(s).

**5.3.** Correspondence intended for inclusion in a Council Agenda shall be legible, addressed to the Mayor and Council, and shall include the name and signature of at least one person or agency. The Correspondence may further include



personal contact information, which will appear redacted on the Council Agenda. For greater clarity, anonymous Correspondence will not be included on the Council Agenda.

- 5.4.** Correspondence intended for inclusion on a Council Agenda shall be received in the Office of Clerk, per the Town's Procedural By-law.
- 5.5.** Correspondence intended for inclusion on a Council Agenda received after the deadline as specified in the Town's Procedural By-law shall be included in the next regular meeting Council Agenda. However, if the Clerk deems the Correspondence to be time-sensitive and relevant to a matter on the current Agenda, the Clerk may include the correspondence as part of an addendum package.
- 5.6.** Names, signatures, and street names contained within Correspondence will be included in the Agenda package published on the Town's website. Personal contact information, including telephone numbers, email addresses, and municipal addresses, will be redacted and will not appear on the published Agenda.
- 5.7.** Notwithstanding section 5.6, in the case of petitions, all information will be included within the Council Agenda. Additionally, personal information may be published when a form directly alludes to the disclosure and the requestor signs an acknowledgment.
- 5.8.** Correspondence shall not contain any defamatory statements, allegations, inferences, impertinent, disrespectful, or improper content. If such infractions are found, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer, shall either redact the offending content or withhold the Correspondence from inclusion on the Agenda in full and return it to the author. If redactions are made for this purpose, the author shall be notified, generally in the same manner in which the Correspondence was received.
- 5.9.** Council Meeting Agendas, minutes, and all information presented at an open Meeting, including Correspondence or delegation materials, are public documents and are published on the Town of Pelham website as part of a Council Agenda package.
- 5.10.** Correspondence provided for inclusion on the Council Agenda will be added, for information.
- 5.11.** Correspondence directed to the Mayor and Council through the Clerk, and not intended for inclusion on a Council Agenda, shall be forwarded to Members of



Council and shall not be placed on a Council Agenda.

**5.12.** All decisions of Council concerning Correspondence included in an Agenda will be communicated to the author, generally in the same manner in which it was received, save and except individuals listed on a petition.

**5.13.** Correspondence, intended for Council and/or Committee is generally received as public information subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The Clerk shall be advised of any confidential items, the general nature thereof, and will determine if the item meets identified criteria for confidential Correspondence as to whether it will be included within the Council Agenda, circulated under separate cover, or included on a closed session Agenda.

**5.14.** Correspondence received from persons other than public entities for inclusion on a Council Agenda which contains material (statement, email, letter etc.) from an individual other than the author will be redacted unless explicit permission to release is provided to the Clerk.

## **6. Correspondence Received for Public Meetings**

**6.1.** Correspondence received in response to a Public Notice under the *Planning Act*, or any Act that requires a Public Meeting, addressed to the Mayor and Council, or to the Clerk, shall be placed on the pertinent Public Meeting Agenda to be considered as part of the submissions relating to the application under consideration, and shall be received by resolution. Correspondence relating to a development application that is not specifically addressed to the Mayor and Council, or the Clerk, shall not be included on the Public Meeting Agenda, i.e. correspondence between an individual and a member of staff relating to the development. Correspondence relating to a development application included on the Agenda becomes part of a public record.

## **7. Resolutions from Other Municipalities and Government Entities**

**7.1.** All resolutions received from other municipalities and correspondence from government entities will be electronically distributed to Members of Council for informational purposes. This distribution will be referred to as the "Council Correspondence Listing."

**7.2.** Where a Member of Council has lifted an item from the Council Correspondence Listing, the item will be added to the next regular meeting Council Agenda, for information.



## **8. Proclamations**

**8.1.** Requests for proclamation endorsement shall be placed on the consent Agenda of a Council meeting, for action. If approved, the Mayor shall sign the proclamation. A signed copy of the proclamation shall be forwarded to the requesting organization and placed on the Town's website.

## **9. Funding Requests**

### **9.1. Budget Open House/Capital-Operating**

- a. Annually Council holds a budget open house where members of the public are invited to address Council and request items be added to the upcoming municipal budget.
- b. Members of the public may either submit Correspondence outlining their said request, to be included on the Agenda or attend as a delegate. All submissions, written or requests to be a delegate, shall be submitted to the Clerk in accordance with the Town's procedural by-law.

### **9.2. Community Grant Requests**

- a. Municipal grant requests will be processed in accordance with Municipal Grant Policy S400-04.

## **10. Petitions**

- 10.1.** Petitions submitted to Council will be handled in accordance with both the Town of Pelham Procedural By-law and the guidelines outlined in this policy.
- 10.2.** Petitions shall be legibly written or printed and shall not contain any obscene or improper material or language and shall be signed by at least one person and filed with the Clerk.
- 10.3.** The text outlining the purpose of the petition must be listed at the top of each page for multiple-page petitions.
- 10.4.** The petition must clearly disclose on each page that it will become a public document belonging to the Town of Pelham and that all information contained within the petition, including personal information, will be available for viewing by the public and may be reproduced in a future Council agenda, available to the public. A sample is provided in Appendix "A".



- 10.5.** Petitions will be included on the Council Agenda including any personal, identifiable information. For greater clarity, personal, identifiable information includes a name, street and numbered address, phone number, email address and/or signature.
- 10.6.** Electronic petitions (ex. Change.org) may be accepted and presented to Council on a Council Agenda. Where an electronic petition is submitted, a screenshot of the petition details, including the number of signatures will be accepted and published on the Council Agenda. A live link to the petition will not be accepted or published on a Council Agenda. An electronic extract of signatories must be submitted to the Clerk by the petition administrator; however, the extract will not be included on a Council Agenda. The extract may be viewed by a member of Council in the Clerk's Office by appointment.
- 10.7.** The Clerk shall refuse to list a petition on the Council Agenda where the subject matter involves:
- a. Matters of litigation or potential litigation with the Town
  - b. Insurance claims;
  - c. Labour relations, union negotiations or employee relations;
  - d. Advertisements for products or services or for the sole purpose of publicity or promotion;
  - e. A bid or a potential bid on a tender that is currently open or being presented for approval;
  - f. Election campaign related;
  - g. Matters outside or beyond the Town's jurisdiction;
  - h. Matters which are the subject of a future statutory Public Meeting or of a statutory Public Meeting which has been closed;
  - i. Matters which have been decided by Council within one year of the original decision;
  - j. Matters which have been referred to staff for a report, until the matter is before Council for consideration; or
  - k. Matters which are the subject of an education and training session of Council.
- 10.8.** Petitions that meet the above standards will be presented to Council at its next regular meeting, or the meeting at which the subject of the petition is to be discussed.
- 10.9.** The Clerk will evaluate all petitions to ensure the requirements of this policy are met. At the discretion of the Clerk in consultation with the CAO, petitions deemed to be in non-compliance will be redacted in full or in-part prior to inclusion on the Council Agenda.



- 10.10.** Individual responses to persons included on a petition will not be issued unless specifically directed by Council.
- 10.11.** To avoid any perception of bias, Members of Council should avoid signing any petition addressed to Town Council or Committee.

## **11. Attachments**

### **11.1. Appendix A – Standard Petition Form**



**Appendix A – Sample Petition Form**

To: Members of Council, Town of Pelham  
C/o Town Clerk  
20 Pelham Town Square, PO Box 400  
Fonthill, ON L0S 1E0

I/We the undersigned, petition to Pelham Town Council as follows:

<**Petition text:** Enter a brief description of the matter being brought forward here, and include this text on every page of the petition>

Printed Name	Printed Address	Signature

By signing this petition, I hereby acknowledge that this petition will become a record belonging to the Town of Pelham and that all information contained in this petition, including personal information, will be available for viewing by the public and may be reproduced in a future Council Agenda, available to the public through the municipal webpage.