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## Memorandum

**PBLRC-C 5-2024**

**Subject:** Display of Signage in the Council Chamber

**Date:** June 25, 2024

**To:** Procedural By-law Review Committee

**From:** Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

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At its meeting held on May 27, 2024, Committee passed the following motion:

That staff **BE DIRECTED** to provide language respecting an amendment to the Procedural By-law to ban all props, signs, placards and flags at Regional Council and Committee meetings.

Committee was provided information with regard to signage at its meetings held on April 22 and May 27, 2024 through agenda items PBLRC-C 1-2024 and PBLRC-C 3-2024. Those items have been attached to this memorandum for Committee's reference.

Further to the direction provided, Committee may wish to consider the following amendment to the Procedural By-law:

Members of the public, including delegates, are not permitted to have signs, props, placards or flags of any kind at meetings of Regional Council or its Committees.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Ann-Marie Norio  
Regional Clerk

## Memorandum

**PBLRC-C 1-2024**

**Subject:** Motion from Regional Council – Workplace Harassment and the Display of Signage

**Date:** April 22, 2024

**To:** Procedural By-law Review Committee

**From:** Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

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At its meeting held on March 21, 2024, Regional Council passed the following motion:

WHEREAS Niagara Regional Council supported recommendations by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to strengthen Codes of Conduct to protect municipal staff from workplace harassment; and

WHEREAS Niagara Regional Council's own Code of Conduct speaks to how Members of Council shall conduct themselves in relation to staff; and

WHEREAS staff of Niagara Region should never be the target of abusive behaviour, whether through public or private communications, from Councillors, co-workers, or the public; and

WHEREAS, on September 21, 2023, Niagara Regional Council also passed a motion affirming equity, diversity, and inclusion and recognizing the damaging impacts of hate and intolerance directed at Members of Council.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Regional Council **REAFFIRMS** its position that neither Councillors nor staff should be targets of harassment or other abusive behaviour from Members of Council, co-workers, or the public; and
2. That staff **PROVIDE** a report for consideration by the Procedural By-law Review Committee that includes draft wording to amend the Procedural By-law to address the display of signage in Council/Committee meetings that is contrary to Council's position on and Niagara Region's policies addressing Workplace Harassment and Violence, and best practices for addressing their removal.

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As a starting point for Committee, jurisdictional scans of other municipalities including the local area municipalities have been completed with respect to signage and are attached for reference. Prior to considering wording to address signage that is contrary to Council's position on and Niagara Region's policies addressing Workplace Harassment and best practices for addressing removal, Committee should consider signage overall. It is hoped the jurisdictional scan will provide Committee with information to inform its direction in that regard.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Ann-Marie Norio  
Regional Clerk

Item	Niagara Region (2010)	Durham Region (2018)	City of Vaughan (2011)	Peel Region (2022)	York Region (2018)	City of Hamilton (2021)	Region of Halton (2019)
Signs in Council Chamber	Silent	Silent	Silent	Silent	Silent	Signs or placards are permitted at Council and Committee Meetings, provided: (a) they do not contain disrespectful or offensive language; (b) they do not disrupt the Meeting; (c) they do not disrupt an attendee’s ability to view the proceedings; and (d) they do not contain solid handles or hard backings.	Silent

Item	Fort Erie	Grimsby	Lincoln	Niagara Falls	NOTL	Pelham	Port Colborne	St. Catharines	Thorold	Wainfleet	Welland
Signs in Council Chamber	Silent	No signs, placards or banners of any kind are allowed in the Council Chamber except with the express permission of the Chair.	Silent	Silent	Presiding Officer may expel or exclude from any meeting any person who: bring any signs or placards into the meeting location	No person shall display signs, applaud or jeer participants in debate or engage in conversation or other behavior which may disrupt the proceedings of the Council or Committee.	Silent	Silent	Members of the public in attendance at a meeting, shall not: Bring any signs or placards into the Council Chambers;	Silent	Silent

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## Memorandum

**PBLRC-C 3-2024**

**Subject:** Display of Signage in the Council Chamber

**Date:** May 27, 2024

**To:** Procedural By-law Review Committee

**From:** Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

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At its meeting held on April 22, 2024, the Committee considered Correspondence Item PBLRC-C 1-2024 respecting Motion from Regional Council – Workplace Harassment and the Display of Signage. This item included a jurisdictional scan of Procedure By-laws from other municipalities including local Councils. Committee passed the following motion:

That staff **BE DIRECTED** to provide suggestions to amend the Procedural By-law respecting signage, similar to the provisions in the City of Hamilton's Procedural By-law, including provisions related to signage that names or identifies specific individuals.

The City of Hamilton's Procedural By-law includes the following with respect to signage:

"Signs or placards are permitted at Council and Committee meetings, provided: a) they do not contain disrespectful or offensive language; b) they do not disrupt the meeting; c) they do not disrupt an attendee's ability to view the proceedings; and d) they do not contain solid handles or hard backings".

Should Committee wish to have the Procedural By-law amended to include similar language, the following could be included:

Signs or placards are permitted at Council and Committee meetings, provided:

- a) they do not contain hate speech, defamatory, disrespectful or offensive language or imagery or name or identify specific individuals;
- b) they do not disrupt the meeting;
- c) they do not disrupt an attendee's ability to view the proceedings; and
- d) they are paper or fabric and do not contain solid handles or hard backings.

Committee may wish to give some additional consideration to including clarity around signage size, material, the number of signs allowed.

Committee may further wish to consider language from the City of Toronto Procedure By-law that may assist with limiting disruptions in the gallery that states:

“No one may display signs or placards, applaud debating participants, or engage in conversation or other behaviour that may disrupt a meeting”.

Similar provisions are included in the City of Ottawa and Region of Waterloo Procedural By-laws and including provisions such as this would codify the prohibition of signs and other disruptions in the gallery and is aligned with both federal and provincial guidelines. It has been the practice to permit signage outside of the Council Chamber where it can still be publicly seen but does not create a distraction or disruption to the business of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Ann-Marie Norio  
Regional Clerk