

**Barriers to Public Participation
In Delegating to Council
Niagara Region
Procedural By-Law Review Committee**

April 22, 2024

Saleh Waziruddin

Some opportunities for improvement:



- **Public unaware until too late**
- **Deadlines too tight for effective voices**
- **“Catch 22” or “Mission Impossible” rules**
- **Uncertain when agendas will actually be published**
- **“Shooting in the dark” when submitting requests**
- **Playing roulette with Council if miss deadlines**

tl;dr/Pre-cap:

- **Many days to get the best voices**
- **Agenda publication should not be barrier**
- **Staff prep doesn't need to be a barrier**
- **Emergency delegations are truly emergencies**
- **Don't make Council vote default for missed deadlines**
- **Recommendations to move deadlines up...
much further or eliminate altogether (it's been done!)**

Historical (?) background:



Sometimes deadline preceded agenda publication.
***Impossible* to meet deadlines...without time machine.**

2022 Ukraine voluntary self-sanction motion:



● **Norio, Ann-Marie**

From: ann-marie.norio@niagararegion.ca

To: salehw@yahoo.com



Tue, May 17, 2022 at 8:32 p.m.

Good evening Saleh,

Tue, May 17, 2022 at 8:51 p.m.

The Clerk's Office has received your request to delegate to Regional Council at its meeting being held on May 19, 2022, respecting the motion from Councillor Gibson regarding Voluntary Russian Sanction Request. The deadline for submitting delegation requests was Friday at 9:00 a.m.; however, you may still appear before Regional Council subject to Council passing a motion that recognizes you as a delegate. Your request to delegate has been included on the Council agenda for Council's consideration.

I appreciate that my request came after the deadline, however the deadline was impossible to meet as the agenda was not posted until after the deadline. Please see the attached screenshot.

I have run into this issue before and have been accommodated without being subjected to the condition of a vote from councillors to be permitted to speak, because the deadline was impossible to meet as the agenda was not posted until after the deadline had already passed.

I am asking to be permitted to speak without being conditional on a vote on the basis that the agenda itself was posted after the deadline had passed and I made my



● **Norio, Ann-Marie**

From: ann-marie.norio@niagararegion.ca

To: Saleh Waziruddin



Tue, May 17, 2022 at 9:17 p.m. ☆

Hi Saleh,

You are correct regarding the deadline and it is more than problematic. Council will actually be considering a by-law amendment on Thursday to change the deadline to Tuesday to give any potential delegations adequate notice to be able to submit.


I have added your delegation to the agenda and will not require a motion from Council.

Please accept my apologies.

Ann-Marie

The fix:

“Gap week”

Example Month				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
				Standing Committee Addendums Release
	Standing Committee Meetings	Standing Committee Meetings		
	Council Agenda Release			Delegation Requests due by 9:00 a.m.
	Council Addendum Agenda Release In extenuating circumstance - Delegation Requests due by 4:00 p.m.		Council Meeting	Standing Committee Agenda Release

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Note: Gap is for only *some* committees (standing)

April 2024							May >
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	
	1 Offices Closed due to Holiday	2	3	4 Committee of the Whole	5	6	
7	8	9 Public Works Committee Public Health and	10 Corporate Services Committee Planning and	11	12	13	
14	15	16 Niagara Transit Commission Diversity Equity	17 - Today	18 Joint Board of Management Niagara Region Courts	19 Agricultural Policy and Action Committee	20	
21	22 Procedural By-law Review Committee	23 Accessibility Advisory Committee	24	25 Special Council Regional Council	26	27	
28	29 Cancelled - Waste Management Planning Steering	30					

And inevitably things happen slightly late sometimes

Agendas and Minutes

Search agendas and minutes...

Upcoming Meetings

List

Council Special
Thursday, April 25, 2024 @ 4:00 PM
Council Chamber - In Person and Electronic Meeting
[Meeting Notice.docx](#)

Past Meetings

2024 (4)

Council (3) >

Council
Thursday, March 21, 2024 @ 6:30 PM
Council Chamber - In Person and Electronic Meeting
[Revised Agenda HTML](#) | [PDF](#)

**Wednesday week before
(was added in evening)**



**Problem with tying deadlines
to fixed timelines:
life goes off-schedule**

How some may think delegations get organized



**Day 1: read the agenda
(same day or maybe next day)
Day 1 or 2: submit request**

The four classes of delegates

#1



#2



Not a
good
thing



Delegation Awards		
(credit: S. Ligetfalvy delegation)		
🥇 GOLD	John Bacher	7 delegations
🥈 SILVER	Danielle Romanuk	5 delegations
🥉 BRONZE	Adam Soos (sic) Saleh Waziruddin Steffannie Hancharyk	4 delegations

#3



#4



οἱ πολλοί

99.99%



How delegations *actually* get organized



οἱ πολλοί

Day 1-3: medalist reads the agenda (maybe, maybe not)

**Day 2-4: medalist contacts “the voice”
Puts call out on social media, emails**

Day 3-6: “the voice” submits request (takes 2-3 days), contacts hoi polloi

Day 4-8: Hoi polloi get message, respond over 2-3 days if interested, confident, etc. with consultation

Example (from before the fix)

[REDACTED] Committee meeting is May 10 930am but deadline to submit is 9am today but you can submit late and they'll vote on it. Would you want to speak? I just submitted mine only found out about the deadline this morning. [REDACTED]

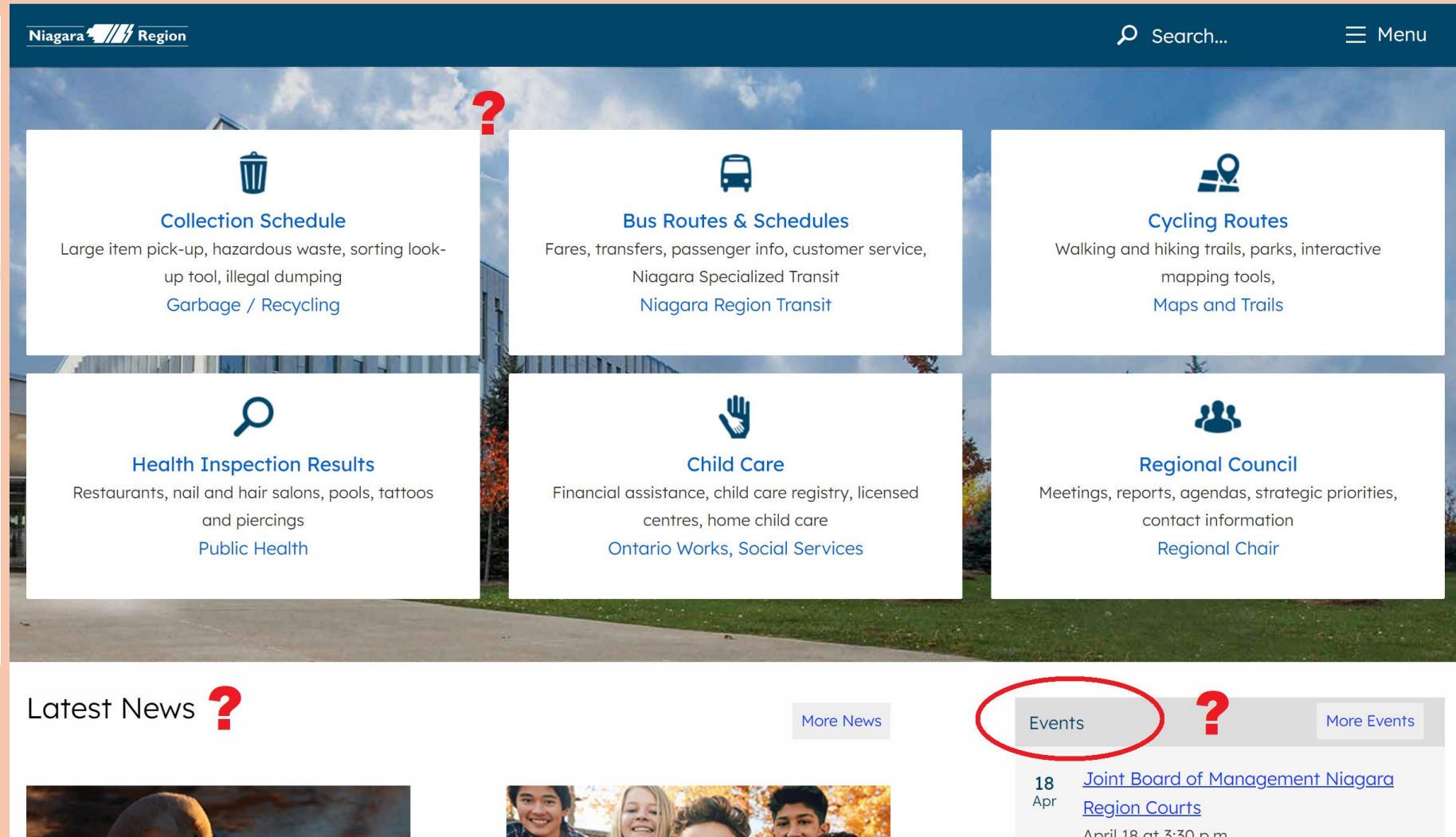
How to improve agenda publicity/access

SUBSCRIBE



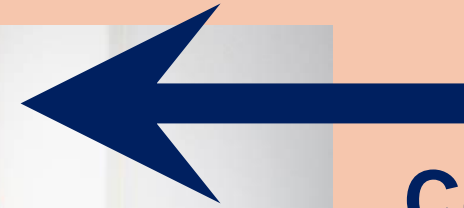
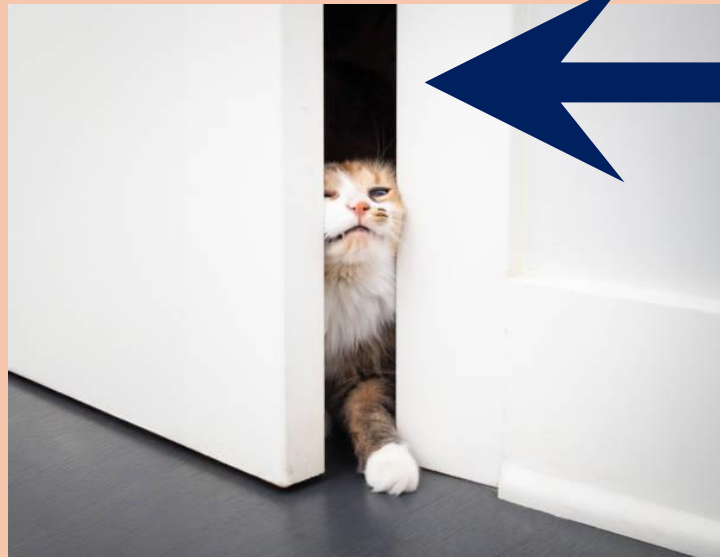
Include:

- **Deadlines**
- **Submission links**



**Staff support on delegations not *always* necessary
...at least not *right away***

- In ideal world: can have staff input on everything**
- Some delegations have non-controversial requests**
- Can listen now, get staff input after: can refer/defer**
- Tight time windows for public and staff to access
Council and committees**



**Council or
Committee
Meeting**

Items not on the agenda (or are they?)



“Late” (but on time) items added to agenda

Previously presented topic	No
Presentation Details	<div>nt I</div> <p>do not see this on the agenda as of yet, but i wish to speak to the motion.</p>
Video Consent	Yes

To: Saleh Waziruddin

was on the agenda, but it didn't show until this morning. So ya, when I made the delegation request on Friday I was very much shooting in the dark. Given that Council meetings are on Thursdays, and they seem to usually accept late delegations, (with some very notable exceptions), requiring delegations to submit the previous Friday feels like an unnecessary complication.

Good to hear from you, Saleh :)

Emergency situations truly are *Emergencies*

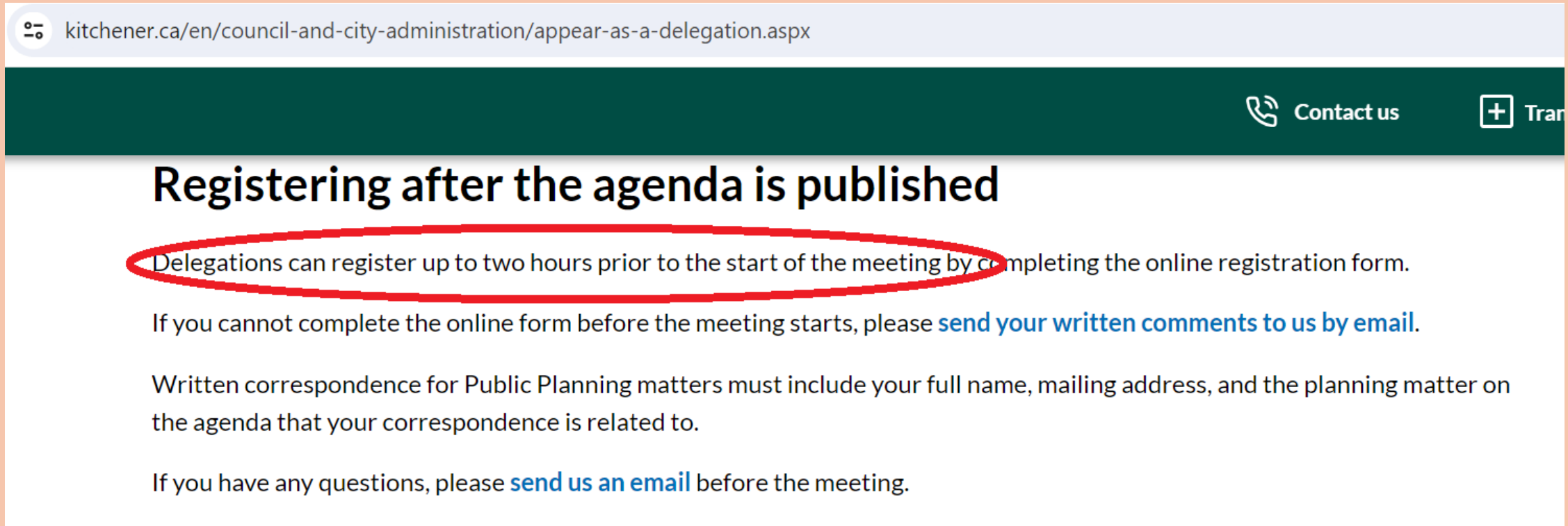


**Depending on will of Council not good default
*...and unnecessary!***



**Don't let getting on the agenda get in the way of...
getting on the agenda.**

If it works in Kitchener...



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL kitchener.ca/en/council-and-city-administration/appear-as-a-delegation.aspx. The page has a dark green header with a "Contact us" button and a "Transparency" icon. The main content area has a white background. The title "Registering after the agenda is published" is in bold black text. Below it, a sentence is circled in red: "Delegations can register up to two hours prior to the start of the meeting by completing the online registration form." This sentence is followed by two paragraphs: "If you cannot complete the online form before the meeting starts, please [send your written comments to us by email](#)." and "Written correspondence for Public Planning matters must include your full name, mailing address, and the planning matter on the agenda that your correspondence is related to." The final paragraph says: "If you have any questions, please [send us an email](#) before the meeting."

kitchener.ca/en/council-and-city-administration/appear-as-a-delegation.aspx

Contact us

Transparency

Registering after the agenda is published

Delegations can register up to two hours prior to the start of the meeting by completing the online registration form.

If you cannot complete the online form before the meeting starts, please [send your written comments to us by email](#).

Written correspondence for Public Planning matters must include your full name, mailing address, and the planning matter on the agenda that your correspondence is related to.

If you have any questions, please [send us an email](#) before the meeting.

Even better: Kitchener-Waterloo Region has *NO* deadlines, only a 2 min penalty if less than 24 hrs

Recommendations

1. Items on agenda: cut deadline to 2 hrs before meeting (better yet: *no* deadlines like Kitchener-Waterloo Region!)
2. Items not on agenda: cut deadline to 3 days after agenda published or week before meeting (whichever is later)
3. Emergency items: cut deadline to morning of meeting (staff can alert Council if need to investigate)
4. Separate being published in agenda from actually being in the agenda (no penalty if miss publication deadline)
5. Don't use Council vote as default for missed deadlines
6. Offer email subscription to agendas, promote on social media, and on Region website front page *with deadlines and submission links*