



October 22, 2016

Chair and Members
Corporate Services Committee

Recently, on several occasions, some members of the public approached me expressing their frustration and disappointment regarding the increasing number of delays in dealing with public business at Council meetings, as a result of the length of the "Council, In Closed Session" portion of the Council meeting.

These people would like to see a hard stop of the Council, In Closed Session, so that the Public Session can resume by 5:15 p.m. They and I recognize and appreciate that sometimes some Council, In Closed Session items need to be dealt with prior to the public portion of the Council agenda, as those advice help to form Council's decisions; however, they feel that provision could be made to deal with those matters as the first items of business during Council, In Closed Session, after which the balance of the Council, In Closed Session could be deferred until towards the end of the public portion of the Council meeting. With this in mind I respectfully put the following motion forward:

The City Clerk BE DIRECTED to report back on steps to be taken in order to set a hard stop of 5:15 for Council, In Closed Session, recognizing that if all Council, In Closed Session matters are not concluded within that time period, the balance of the Council, In Closed Session would occur after the public standing committee reports have been dealt with.

BACKGROUND

In the past, Council meetings used to start at 1:00 p.m. Subsequently, about 10 years ago, in response to requests from many interested members of the public who wanted to attend the Council meetings but had to be at work during the day, the start time of Council meetings and Standing Committee meetings (except for Board of Control) were moved to start at 5:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. respectively. Council, In Closed Session were held at the end or as necessary. Soon, it was recognized that there were always some Council, In Closed Session matters to take care of earlier in the meeting. Hence, about 5 years ago, we changed the timing to start at 4:00 p.m., with the preliminary open session, then quickly go into the Council, In Closed Session for an hour maximum, i.e. until approximately 5:15 p.m. Unfortunately, recently, occasionally we have been falling short of that timing, hence the complaint from the public. This motion is to bring it back in line to help satisfy members of the public, who want to attend.

Harold Usher

Councillor – Ward 12