

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON NOVEMBER 5, 2019
FROM:	WILLIAM C. COXHEAD ACTING DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES
SUBJECT:	RECOGNITION EVENT FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Acting Director, Human Resources the following report regarding an event to recognize Black History Month:

- a) **BE RECIEVED** and that any decision **BE DEFERRED** until a review of the Issuance of Proclamation Policy is completed and a report is submitted at a future date.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

None

BACKGROUND

Council approved the following resolutions on June 11, 2019:

That on the recommendation of the City Clerk, the following actions be taken with respect to the "Policy for the Establishment and Maintenance of Council Polices...

*...d) the Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to report back to the Corporate Services Committee with respect to the potential for a new policy whereby the City of London would host an annual event to recognize Black History month."*

The purpose of this report is to provide information in regards to what events have been undertaken in the past at the City of London in support of Black History Month, as well as outline what future events are planned for 2020, and to seek direction regarding other potential events and associated policy development.

Black History Month

Black History Month is celebrated across North America in the month of February; it was established in 1975 in the USA and in Canada, provincially in Ontario in 1995, and it was proclaimed federally in 2008.

Follow the link for information on Black History Month in Canada here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/black-history-month.html>

London Black History Month Coordinating Committee has been leading the work on establishment of Black History Month in London since 2002, out of a desire to increase awareness of Black History Month activities in the London area. The Committee dedicates itself to providing programs and services that increase public understanding of the diversity and history of London's Black community.

Follow the link for information on the Coordinating Committee and its history and activities: <http://lcclc.org/index.php/black-history-month>

Historical Overview of City of London Employee Black History Events

The first City of London Black History Month Celebration was hosted in February of 2018 where then Mayor had welcomed the attendees to the 90 minute program that was hosted on the 12th floor at City Hall. Approximately 75 people attended this event including City of London employees, members of council as well as members of the public. The event incorporated a panel of Black professionals from education, finance, legal, and policing sectors who presented on the resilience and success of black family in London area.

Between the fall of 2018 and early 2019, a new Employee Resource Group ('ERG') called ABC (African, Black and Caribbean identifying employees and their Allies) was established. One of their first action items was to host a Black History Month event at the Dearness Homes. This event was held in February 2019 and included information on Black History Month in Canada as well as presentation on significant historical figures and events pertaining to the Black communities residing in Southwestern Ontario. The same ERG also hosted the first Emancipation Day Recognition event at the City of London in August of 2019. The program included key note presentation by Dr. Christopher Taylor on impact of colonization and slavery on the Black community as well as discussion around the historical meaning of emancipation on the current status of Black communities living in Canada. The event also showcased steel pan music and Caribbean food for the attendees.

On November 20, 2018 the Community Emancipation Day, sponsored by the City's Culture Office was the recipient of the London, Diversity, Race Relations and Inclusivity Award. The first Emancipation Day Celebration was held in Springbank Park in August of 1948 and continued for 38 consecutive years. In 2013 the event was brought to its new location at the Heritage Meeting Tree at Westminster Ponds and is held every year the second last week of September as the launch of National Forest Week.

Future City of London Employee Events Black History Month Events

The City of London is looking to build upon the success of events over the past years. The following events are planned for February 2020.

- The ABC Employee Resources Group will be hosting an event that will feature a keynote speaker. This event will be open to City of London employees, members of Council as well as members of the public. This event will be advertised on the Black History Month calendar.
- The City of London will be hosting art work celebrating Black History Month at the Celebration Space at City Hall.
- The City of London will be showcasing screen savers on all City of London computers for the month of February celebrating Black History.

Stakeholder Feedback

After individual discussions with both the organizers of Black History Month and the requesting Council member it was determined that both were supportive of the City of London employee events held in the past as well as those scheduled for the future and were not seeking any changes in that regard. They did indicate however a desire to have this month more formally recognized in February at Council in the form of a proclamation.

As a result Civic Administration has reviewed Council policies as well as considered other options that Council might consider to formally recognize Black History Month.

a) Proclamation at City of London

The City of London currently has an 'Issuance of Proclamation Policy' (Appendix A) that sets out the corporate position with respect to the issuance of proclamations. This policy applies to any request for the issuance of proclamations on behalf of the City of London. According to this policy, no proclamations shall be issued on behalf of the City of London, except those required by law to be issued.

Council has recently directed Civic Administration to review and report back to the Corporate Services Committee with respect to the City of London Issuance of Proclamation Policy, specifically in terms of acknowledging nationally recognized proclamations.

b) Delegation Before Council

Arrangements could be made through the City Clerk's Office to invite a delegation from the Black History Month Coordinating Committee to attend the first Council meeting in February of each year to share information about Black History and the events planned for the month. This would be similar to recognitions received at Council in the past such as the Emancipation Day Recognition.

CONCLUSION

Given the request for a review and report back regarding the Councils existing Issuance of Proclamations Policy, Civic Administration recommends that this matter be deferred until a report on that matter is received and direction given at a future meeting.

PREPARED BY:	REVIEWED BY:
SALEHA KHAN, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SPECIALIST	GARY BRIDGE MANAGER, HUMAN RESOURCES AND CORPORATE SERVICES
RECOMMENDED BY:	
WILLIAM C. COXHEAD ACTING DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCES	

APPENDIX A

Issuance of Proclamations Policy

Policy Name: Issuance of Proclamations Policy

Legislative History: Adopted September 19, 2017 (By-law No. CPOL.-115-367);
Amended July 24, 2018 (By-law No. CPOL.-115(a)-418)

Last Review Date: April 15, 2019

Service Area Lead: City Clerk

1. Policy Statement

1.1 This policy sets out the corporate position with respect to the issuance of proclamations.

2. Definitions

2.1 Not applicable.

3. Applicability

3.1 This policy shall apply to any request for the issuance of proclamations on behalf of the City of London.

4. The Policy

4.1 No proclamations shall be issued on behalf of the City of London, except those required by law to be issued.