

PROTOCOL ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION

Norfolk County Council has amended its Procedural By-Law to allow for electronic participation at Council and Standing Committee Meetings during the ongoing Covid-19 emergency.

This Protocol has been established by the County Clerk to advise how to participate in the public portions of these meetings. These procedures may be modified slightly from usual procedures given the use of technology for electronic participation. All electronic meetings shall be streamed on the County [website](#) and posted on for later viewing on YouTube at the following link [Norfolk County YouTube](#). Agendas will continue to be published on the Friday prior to meetings except in cases where lesser notice is provided for an Emergency or Special meeting as outlined in the County's Procedural By-Law.

Those wishing to comment upon matters before Council or a Standing Committee are recommended to do so in writing and submit to clerks@norfolkcounty.ca

Those requesting to appear as deputations or present during an open public hearing must file a completed form with Council Services **prior to 10 a.m. the Friday prior to the meeting.**¹ Once a deputation request is received further detailed instructions will be provided on how to participate in the meeting.

PARTICIPANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE:

- To log into meetings 10-15 minutes prior to the time assigned;
- To ensure their computer has sufficient internet access and technology to participate in the meeting;
- To submit all handouts, materials and presentations by 10 a.m. Friday prior to the meeting;
- To have a telephone on hand to call into the meeting should they encounter technology issues on their end.

THOSE WISHING TO PARTICIPATE IN STATUTORY PLANNING ACT PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- It is recommended that all comments or questions on planning applications be submitted in writing to the Planner listed on the public notification or to planning@norfolkcounty.ca Written submissions are not required at a public hearing but can be made at a later date and will be accepted up to the date that Council makes a decision on the matter.
- Submissions on planning matters will not necessarily be read at the Public Hearing but will be provided to Planning staff for consideration and/or response and inclusion in the final staff report. Council will be apprised of all public comments within the final staff report, prior to making a decision on the application.

¹ Those wishing to appear before a Committee of Adjustment, Drainage Court of Revision or By-Law Appeals Hearing shall follow the directions provided upon the Notice of Hearing. Directions for meetings under the Planning Act are listed separately in Protocol.

- If you would like to receive information on a specific planning application or to be notified of an upcoming meeting related to a planning matter please email the Planner identified on the public notification or planning@norfolkcounty.ca
- If you are unable to make written submissions or would prefer to make an oral statement during the statutory public meeting please email clerk@norfolkcounty.ca prior to noon on the day before the meeting to register. You will be provided further instructions on how you will connect during the virtual meeting.
- All oral statements will be recorded as part of the electronic meeting and will be posted for public viewing on the County's YouTube Channel and will be included as part of the official meeting record.
- Planning Application applicants and agents, who would like to provide a verbal submission, please email clerk@norfolkcounty.ca by 4:00 p.m. the day prior to the meeting to make arrangements in advance of the meeting.

THOSE WISHING TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT PUBLIC MEETINGS:

- It is recommended that all comments or questions on Committee of Adjustment applications be submitted in writing to the Planner listed on the public notification or to committee.of.adjustment@norfolkcounty.ca. Written submissions will be accepted up to the date that Committee of Adjustment meeting date.
- If you would like to receive information on a specific planning application or to be notified of an upcoming meeting related to a planning matter please email the Planner identified on the public notification or committee.of.adjustment@norfolkcounty.ca
- If you are unable to make written submissions or would prefer to make an oral statement during the Committee of Adjustment public meeting please email committee.of.adjustment@norfolkcounty.ca by to noon on the day before the meeting to register. You will be provided further instructions on how you will connect during the virtual meeting.
- All oral statements will be recorded as part of the electronic meeting and will be posted for public viewing on the County's YouTube Channel and will be included as part of the official meeting record.
- Applicants and Agents will be contacted by the Secretary Treasurer in advance of the meeting to provide instructions on how to access the virtual meeting.

All public meetings will meet statutory requirements. Although options to participate electronically are available Norfolk County is recommending submissions be made in writing.

Any questions with respect to this Protocol may be directed to the Clerk at clerks@norfolkcounty.ca

Attachments:

Appendix A – Best Practices Electronic Participation

BEST PRACTICES ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Avoid wearing stripes or bright colours, solid colours work best;
- Attire should be suited to the meeting you are attending;
- Avoid messy or distracting items in view of your camera;
- Ensure you won't be interrupted;
- Turn off your phone or set to mute.

GETTING STARTED

- Log-on to the meeting 10-15 minutes early to make sure your audio and video are working;
- Check your lighting, too much natural light behind you can wash out your picture;
- If you like to listen to the meeting at a loud volume be aware that you will need to mute your microphone when you are not talking to prevent an audio feedback loop;
- Have the back-up phone number handy in case of technical challenges

DURING THE MEETING

- Look straight into the camera when talking;
- You may need to take extra pauses before and after another participant speaks to ensure you are heard. (Overlapping dialogue can be lost);
- If possible limit your body movements or move slower, fast movements may pixelate or degrade the picture;
- **Keep your microphone muted unless you are speaking.**

PROBLEMS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER

- Rural internet networks are performing significantly worse than they were in pre-pandemic periods. Unlike urban networks they are unable to handle increased user congestion. If this is a concern you may want to contact your internet service provider prior to participating electronically to see if they have upgraded services available in your area. You may also decide to participate via telephone to avoid technical issues.
- If you are disconnected and are having trouble logging back in please use the telephone number provided to rejoin the meeting without video.