

Presenting Deputations to Municipal Councils

For anyone who wants to present a Deputation to their local municipal council, the following is what I have learned from the two that I have presented to the City of Kawartha Lakes Council (Mayor and 8 Ward Councillors.)

Steps

1. Contact the City Clerk's Office to register your deputation request and offer a brief statement about the topic that you wish to present to Council. I applied online through the City's web site. Your request will be reviewed and you will be contacted by someone in the City Clerk's office to offer a date that is acceptable to you. It might take a week or more to receive this call. When approved, your deputation will appear on the Council's Agenda. The November 7 Agenda <https://calendar.kawarthalakes.ca/meetings/Detail/2023-11-07-1300-Committee-of-the-Whole/c2cd5b67-4c9e-4a56-9fab-b0ad0153720e> shows my deputation as COW2023-09.4.2.

In support of COW2023-09.4.2, I filed two documents.

2. Five minutes is the allowed time for your deputation. It goes fast. It is best that you plan what you want to say carefully. My speaking notes are about 500 words (~100 words per minute). I include several elements in my presentation:

Thank you for hearing me today.

State your purpose for the deputation (Note: "objection" is a key word that dignifies that you want to be taken seriously.)

Supporting context. (This is the rationale for why your objection matters).

Specific proposals. (Councillors want to know what you consider to be actionable within the limits of their authority).

Benefits of my proposals. (If you do not spell this out, don't assume that they will surmise the benefits that you anticipate.

3. After your presentation, Council members may comment on it or ask you questions. If they do, this is your opportunity to add to your presentation because there are no time limits imposed.

This is my favourite part.

The Mayor will eventually ask Council to "accept" your deputation which simply means that it will be scheduled for closed-session discussions by Council at a later date.

4. Follow up with your Ward Councillor. Unless you do, your deputation will fade into history and you will never know what Council decided to do with it.

Enjoy

Gene Balfour,

Kawartha Lakes, Ontario

Co-founder of Advocates for Civil Society

MY LIFE LENS author at www.substack.com (about 300 posts)