

How to Make a Deputation

MAKING A DEPUTATION AT CITY HALL

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This is a guide to help you in making a deputation to one of the City Council Committees. While this information is particularly designed for deputations during the budget process the same basic information applies other times as well.

Background

If you are interested in deputing you must make an appointment with the City Clerk responsible for each committee. Please refer to the contact information below.

The clerk will ask for your name, organization (if applicable), phone number and address. She/he will also tell you what room the meeting will be held in, and if there is a special time for deputations that day.

If there isn't an assigned time you should arrive at 9:30 am at the meeting room. Be prepared that there may be a lengthy wait.

When you arrive in the room you should be able to get a copy of the "Deputation List". If this information isn't on one of the side tables you can ask the clerk. The clerk will be sitting to the left of the chair of the committee (when you are facing the desks). This list will tell you the order of the speakers and what issues they are there to depute on.

Writing the Deputation

Most people find it helpful to have some notes jotted down before they begin speaking. If you are nervous or don't want to forget anything write down your whole speech. There is no problem with reading your deputation.

Remember you only have 5 minutes!! [OR MAYBE ONLY 3!!!]

- Your deputation should start by thanking the Chair and the Committee.
- Introduce yourself and explain why you are speaking.
- If you represent a group explain a little bit about the group and their mandate.
- Make your deputation as personal as possible. Explain how the proposed cuts or changes will affect you, your family and your community.

- If you are a user of a service that is at risk explain what benefits you have gained from that service, what help an agency gave you, and how the community would suffer if the program was gone.
- Talk about the staff or volunteers of the program and what assistance they provided.
- If you are willing to help City Council lobby the Province or Federal government to get more money for cities let them know that! (And then follow-up by writing a letter to your MPP and MP!)
- Deputations that use statistics to help make a point are good, but prepared to back up the statistic if asked by a councillor.
- Councillors like to know their money is doing good work and being used efficiently. Explain to them the cost-benefit of the program (ie. When you got assistance at a community centre to learn to speak English you were able to get a better job, buy a house and start paying property taxes!)
- If you are a homeowner let Councillors know that you want your taxes to go to support a public and social infrastructure.
- End by thanking council and remind them that you will be watching their voting on this issue.

Note: Practice the deputation at home to make sure it sounds okay. Check the timing to see if it needs to be shortened.

Making the Deputation

- You will have up to 5 minutes to make your deputation. If you go over the 5 minutes the Chair of the Committee will cut you off. Often when there are a lot of people wanting to make deputations the committee will decide to reduce the time to 3 or 4 minutes. Be prepared to edit your comments at the last minute.
- You can make a written copy of your deputation, as well as provide background material. This should be given to the clerk who will then distribute it to the members of the Committee.
- When your name is called you should go forward to the centre table facing the Chair of the Committee.
- The microphone may or may not be on already. When it is on a small red light will be visible on the microphone. If it isn't on press the large button on the base of the microphone. Pull the microphone close to you or adjust the height as necessary. You need to speak clearly and into the microphone but you do not need to "eat" the mouthpiece!!

- Smile and be friendly! Don't be afraid. Councillors want to hear what you have to say.
- You may be asked questions by Councillors after your deputation. If not you are free to leave or can remain to hear the debate and discussion on the issue.

Other Information

- Call your local Councillor and tell them you will be making a deputation. Ask them to come to the meeting room to hear you.
- Make sure you send your local councillor a copy of your deputation.
- Follow up and ask your local councillor whether they support your position.
- A few weeks after the committee has met you will receive a copy of their decision by mail. This will also include a list of names of people who deputed.
- If you are unable to be at City Hall when the deputations are happening send it in writing. All councillors on the committee will receive a copy of the written deputation.
- If you are a staff member at an agency it can be helpful to have a client/service user speak as well. You can either reserve two back-to-back deputation spots, or share the 5 minutes (but watch the time).
- If you need translation services that can be arranged by the clerk, or you may bring your own translator with you.

For further information:

Clerk's Office
Toronto City Hall, 2nd Floor, West Tower
100 Queen Street West,
Toronto ON M5H 2N2
Phone: (416) 392-7039.
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