



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ST. CLAIR

Subject	LIVE STREAMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS POLICY	Section	Policy
Effective Date	May 1, 2023	Approved By: Council	
Revision Date			

LIVE STREAMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS POLICY

1.0 PURPOSE:

This Policy aims to improve accessibility and community participation in relation to decision making processes. It is predicted that live streaming Council Meetings on the Township's website will provide more flexible and convenient access to Council debates and decisions to a wider audience. Live streaming Council Meetings also eliminates geographic and time barriers which may prevent the public from attending meetings in person; thereby resulting in greater community confidence in the integrity and accountability of the decision-making process. The Live Streaming of Council Meetings Policy provides the policy direction and guidelines for Councillors, Staff and the community.

This Council Policy reflects Council's commitment to transparent and accessible decision-making processes, with the introduction of live streaming of Regular and Special Meetings of Council. Any parts of Council's Meetings that are closed to members of the public under Section 239 of the *Municipal Act* are regarded as confidential and will not be recorded.

2.0 SCOPE:

This Policy applies to:

- Regular and Special Meetings of Council;
- Councillors and Officers of St. Clair Township Council; and
- Members of the public, both as visitors in the gallery and when invited to speak in the Meeting.

3.0 DEFINITIONS:

Closed Section of a Council Meeting - A meeting of the council which has been closed to members of the public under Section 239 of the *Municipal Act*

Chair - the person who chairs a meeting of the Council, predominantly, the Mayor.

Defamation - Intentional false communication which damages the reputation of another individual.

Streaming (Webcasting) The process of delivering multimedia content via the internet, in audio and/or video format from a single content source to multiple listeners/viewers.

Controls Any process, policy, device, practice or other action which impacts on the consequence or likelihood of a particular risk occurring, that is currently in place.

4.0 POLICY CONTENT:

Regular and Special Meetings held in the St. Clair Township Council Chamber will be streamed live in accordance with this Policy and will be able to be accessed from the Township's website:

www.stclairtownship.ca.

Any parts of Council's Meetings that are closed to members of the public under Section 239 of the Municipal Act are regarded as confidential and will not be recorded.

The Chair and/or the Clerk have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of live streaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.

Council will make every effort to ensure that live streaming is available, it takes no responsibility for, and cannot be held liable for technical issues beyond its control. Technical issues may include, but are not limited to, the availability of the internet connection, device failure or malfunction, unavailability of social media platforms or power outages.

The official record of all Council Meetings shall be the written minutes in accordance with the Municipal Act Section 239(1). The live stream file will be archived to the Township's digital channel, which may change from time to time. Files will be hosted on the Township's digital channel during the current year and for one year thereafter when they will be destroyed.

Video files from live streaming on the internet are part of the public realm and as such, are subject to alteration by a member of the public with no municipal control over such alterations. The Municipality assumes no liability associated with any alterations that may be made by a member of the public on the internet.

Publication of Notices – Informing Attendees

It is not the intention of live streaming to capture those attending the Meeting in the gallery, however this may occur due to camera angles and seating arrangements. By attending the public meeting, attendees are consenting to their image, voice or comments being recorded. The agenda will inform attendees that live streaming will be taking place. At the commencement of each Meeting, the Chair will read the statement included in the Council Agenda notifying those present that the Meeting will be live streamed on the internet and that a link to the meeting can be found on the Township's website. [Attachment 1]

Signage communicating a similar message will be visibly displayed in the foyer of the Municipal Council Chambers. [Attachment 2]

Notice will also be published on Council's website. [Attachment 3]

Public Interaction in Council Meetings

4.1 Public Forum

Any attendee who is invited to speak will be recorded and their voice and image will form part of the live stream.

Should an attendee invited to speak, or having a scheduled deputation, not wish to be recorded, they are required to make this request known to the Clerk prior to the meeting commencing. This request shall be made by emailing the Clerk a minimum of four hours prior to the Meeting.

4.2 Presentation of Awards / Public Acknowledgements

Any attendee who is invited to make or receive a presentation or acknowledgement from

Council will be recorded and their voice and image will form part of the live stream.

5.0 POLICY COMMUNICATION:

The Clerk will be responsible for:

- Communicating the relevant public notices in Attachments 1, 2 and 3, to be included in:
 - Public Notice in the Council Agenda
 - Public Notice Signage at the Meeting
 - Public Notice on Council's Website
- Publishing Council Meeting live stream recording links, to Council's website.
- Including a copy of the recording in Council's Record Management System and undertaking relevant archiving and destruction procedures.

The IT Department will be responsible for:

- Setting up, positioning and testing the video equipment for each Council Meeting.
- Provide ongoing support to ensure the live stream is operational for each Meeting.
- Servicing equipment.

6.0 POLICY REVIEW:

This policy will be reviewed once per Council Term or more often as needed.

7.0 COMPLIANCE:

In cases of policy violation, Council may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.

DATE REVISED	SECTION REVISED/ADDED	SIGNATURE

**Attachment 1 – Public Notice to be included in the Council Agenda and to be read out
by the meeting Chair**

Live Streaming of Council Meetings

Today's Meeting is being streamed live through the St. Clair Township Website. To those present in the gallery today, by attending a public meeting of the Council you are consenting to your image, voice and comments being recorded.

Anyone who is invited to speak will be recorded and their voice, image and comments will form part of the live stream.

The Chair and/or the Clerk have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of live streaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.

Attendees are advised that they may be subject to legal action if their actions result in inappropriate and/or unacceptable behaviour and/or comments.

Thank you

Attachment 2 – Public Notice to be displayed as signage at the entrance of the Council Meeting

Today's Meeting is being streamed live through the St. Clair Township Website.

This Council Meeting is being streamed live in accordance with Council's Live Streaming of Council Meetings Policy. A copy of the Policy can be viewed on the Municipal website.

By attending a public meeting of the Council, you are consenting to your image, voice and comments being recorded. Should you wish to attend and/or speak without being recorded you must make this request to Council staff prior to the meeting commencing. This request shall be made by emailing the Clerk a minimum of four hours prior to the meeting.

The Chair and/or the Clerk have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of live streaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.

Whilst Council will make every effort to ensure that live streaming is available, it takes no responsibility for, and cannot be held liable for technical issues beyond its control. Technical issues may include but are not limited to the availability of the internet connection, device failure or malfunction, unavailability of social media platforms or power outages.

It should be noted that no protection is afforded to Councillors, Council employees or the public for comments made during Meetings which are subsequently challenged in a court of law and/or determined to be defamatory.

Attachment 3 - Public Notice to be included on Council's website

All public meetings of St. Clair Township Council are being streamed live through the St. Clair Township's website in accordance with Council's Live Streaming of Council Meetings Policy.

While meetings are open to the public, Council recognizes that not everyone can attend in person. Livestreaming gives all community members the opportunity to watch and listen to meetings, either in real time or at their convenience, giving greater access to Council decision making and debate. By attending a public meeting of the Council attendees are consenting to their image, voice and comments being recorded. Should attendees wish to attend and/or speak without being recorded they must make this request to Council staff prior to the meeting commencing. This request shall be made by emailing the Clerk four hours prior to the meeting.

The Chair and/or the General Manager have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of live streaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.

Whilst Council will make every effort to ensure that live streaming is available, it takes no responsibility for, and cannot be held liable for technical issues beyond its control. Technical issues may include but are not limited to the availability of the internet connection, device failure or malfunction, unavailability of social media platforms or power outages.