

From: **"Mochrie, Paul"**

To: **"Fry, Pete" <Pete.Fry@vancouver.ca>**

"Sim, K"

"Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

Date: 2024-05-13 4:44:39 PM

Subject: RE: Commemorative illumination - Israel's 76th Independence Day

Mayor and Council,

I just noticed an omission from my prior note. Please see the version below including the highlighted update.

Paul

From: Mochrie, Paul

Sent: Monday, May 13, 2024 4:35 PM

To: Fry, Pete <Pete.Fry@vancouver.ca>; Sim, K

Direct to Mayor and Council - DL

Cc: Ford, Trevor <Trevor.Ford@vancouver.ca>; City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL <CMCG@vancouver.ca>

Subject: RE: Commemorative illumination - Israel's 76th Independence Day

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

I am writing in regards to the question that Councillor Fry has raised regarding the application of the Civic Protocol Policy. Acknowledging Councillor Fry's concern, I want to clarify my interpretation of the policy and the scope for exercise of discretion by staff.

As noted below, the policy sets out that the City "reserve[s] the right to decline requests from countries where there is political unrest or conflict". That provision is intended to protect the City from an allegation that a decision to decline a request is inconsistent with the policy. However, as written, that provision does not mandate the rejection of a request in any particular circumstance; the language only preserves the option to decline requests.

The Clerks team has confirmed that there is no precedent in which staff have refused a request for illumination **to recognize a country with which Canada maintains diplomatic relations**. As you may have as well, I have also received correspondence advocating for the City to reject other requests in addition to the commemoration of Israel's independence day.

Ultimately, under the policy, I would characterize this decision as one that Council has discretion to make on a case-by-case basis.

Stating the obvious, I recognize that this situation is very challenging for everyone. If there are any further questions or concerns regarding the policy or the above interpretation, please let me know.

Best,
Paul

From: Fry, Pete <Pete.Fry@vancouver.ca>

Sent: Friday, May 10, 2024 10:36 AM

To: Sim, K

Direct to Mayor and Council - DL

Cc: Ford, Trevor <Trevor.Ford@vancouver.ca>; City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL <CMCG@vancouver.ca>

Subject: RE: Commemorative illumination - Israel's 76th Independence Day

Thanks Ken for acknowledging my email from yesterday – I appreciate that this is not a topic we want to bring to council chambers, and agree ...

HOWEVER, this illumination runs counter to the stated policy that we have on our [website](#): *We reserve the right to decline*

requests from countries where there is political unrest or conflict. We have to answer to that – why have a policy at all if we aren't going to be accountable to it's intent? To be clear and unequivocal I believe lighting up City Hall to celebrate Israel at this time will only create harm in the community and ramp up the rhetoric on all sides. This has absolutely nothing to do with history or Nakba or Israel's right to exist -- It's about our policy, full stop.

We have stood together for Jewish heritage month and to condemn antisemitism, we can easily and reasonably fall back on our policy and say no to blue and white because the nation of Israel is actively participating in a conflict right now that is resulting upwards of 30,000 including civilians and children killed in Gaza and blockades leading to famine for millions directly a result of actions by the state of Israel in this conflict.

I will add that on the subject of responsible actions – it has come to my attention that someone had taken my email from yesterday and used it to mischaracterize me as an antisemite and “against the community” I suggest that is not responsible conduct.

Pete Fry (he/him)

Vancouver City Councillor

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From: Sim, K

Sent: Friday, May 10, 2024 9:38 AM

To: Direct to Mayor and Council - DL

Cc: Ford, Trevor <Trevor.Ford@vancouver.ca>; City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL <CMCG@vancouver.ca>

Subject: Commemorative illumination - Israel's 76th Independence Day

Good morning Councillors,

I'm reaching out as I know there are some concerns regarding the upcoming illumination of City Hall and the Burrard Street Bridge for Israel's Independence Day. I acknowledge, Pete, your email from yesterday suggesting that this matter be brought to the Council for decision, and I understand there are differing views among us. The reality is that the Council is not fully in agreement on the best path forward, and as such, it would be inappropriate to ask staff to reconsider the current trajectory. Therefore, I am unwilling to call a special meeting on this matter. Although there is a special meeting called for next week, the agenda is already set, and as per the procedure by-law, we cannot add any items to the agenda.

I want to be careful with my words as this is a highly sensitive issue for all parties. There have been regular protests across Vancouver regarding the ongoing conflict in Gaza, and there will no doubt continue to be protests in the near future on this issue, whether or not the illumination happens. I ask everyone likewise to be careful and understand their responsibility for any public statements they make on this matter

Let's work together to address this responsibly and with the best interest of our community in mind.

Ken