

Meeting Date: July 15, 2024
Department: Community Services
Report No.: CS-2024-23
Submitted by: Robert Lilbourne Director of Community Services
Approved by: Trisha McKibbin, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Revised RZone Policy

**RECOMMENDATION: THAT: Council receive report CS-2024-23 Revised RZone Policy for information, and further;
THAT: Council approve the revised RZone Policy, and further;
THAT: By-law No. 69-24 be referred to the Consideration of By-laws section of the agenda for approval.**

BACKGROUND:

The RZone Policy is a code of conduct that has been implemented by hundreds of municipalities in Ontario and across Canada to promote respectful and responsible behavior in municipal facilities and properties. The policy is designed to address and prevent violence, abuse, and harassment in facilities, properties, and programs, and during events organized or operated by the Municipality.

Origins and Development

1. Initial Implementation:

- The RZone Policy was first developed and implemented by the Town of Oakville, Ontario, in 2006. The policy was created in response to increasing incidents of inappropriate behavior in sports and recreational facilities. Oakville's initiative aimed to ensure that everyone using these facilities could enjoy a safe, respectful, and harassment-free environment.

2. Spread and Adoption:

- Following Oakville's lead, several other municipalities in Ontario and across Canada adopted similar policies. The success of the RZone Policy in Oakville demonstrated its

effectiveness in promoting a positive atmosphere and reducing incidents of misconduct. As a result, other towns and cities began to recognize the value of having a formal code of conduct.

3. Key Components:

- Respect: Encouraging all participants, spectators, and staff to treat each other with respect.
- Responsibility: Holding individuals accountable for their actions and ensuring they adhere to the established code of conduct.
- Implementation: Training staff to recognize and handle incidents of misconduct, providing clear guidelines on how to report and deal with violations.

Key Features

1. Scope:

- The RZone Policy applies to all people who attend or use municipal facilities, properties, programs and events.

2. Behavioral Expectations:

- The policy outlines specific unacceptable behaviors, such as verbal abuse, physical violence, harassment, discrimination, and vandalism. It emphasizes the importance of respectful interactions among all individuals.

3. Reporting and Enforcement:

- Incidents of misconduct are to be reported to facility staff or event organizers. The policy provides a clear process for documenting and addressing complaints, ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to resolve issues and prevent recurrence.

4. Consequences:

- Consequences for violating the RZone Policy can range from verbal warnings and temporary suspensions to permanent bans from municipal facilities, properties, programs and events, depending on the severity of the behavior.

The RZone Policy was presented to the Community Development and Advisory Committee and at their May 8, 2023 meeting was recommended to Council for Approval. **Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) - May 08, 2023 (escribemeetings.com)**

COMMENTS:

The RZone Policy has recently went under its annual review and out of that review some changes have been recommended. The primary changes revolved around creating clearer language that the

policy covers all Municipal facilities, properties, programs and events. Although the previous version intent was for such, the previous language leaned more toward parks and recreation spaces.

With the growing number of activities, visitors, and residents, it is important that the Municipality ensures a safe and positive environment for all. The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc has many community-based programs managed and operated by volunteers. These community-minded citizens greatly contribute to the quality of life in Strathroy-Caradoc. The Municipality is committed to ensuring that volunteers can participate in a safe and positive environment.

This commitment includes an understanding that organizations and the general public using the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc's property, facilities, and programs must take primary responsibility for the behaviour of all associated with them, including but not limited to participants, officials, spectators, patrons, and parents.

The policy was also shared with the Strathroy Pride organization, which is supportive of the policy. They have indicated it is essential to have and the language used is well written.

CONSULTATION:

Senior Leadership Team

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

N/A

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO THE RECOMMENDATION:

1. Council to provide alternate direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

Community Well-being and Quality of Life: Residents of all ages in Strathroy-Caradoc will have access to community amenities and activities that are accessible and support active lifestyles and wellbeing.

Municipal Customer Service: The Municipality offers seamless, responsive service and an exceptional experience for every customer.

ATTACHMENTS:

RZone Policy redline
Revised RZone Policy