



*The Corporation of*

**THE TOWNSHIP OF MELANCTHON**

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**Denise B. Holmes, AMCT**  
CAO/Clerk-Treasurer

**Council's Position on Questions and Referral under FOI**

Council would like to start by stating that it is our desire and responsibility to be open and transparent. The Municipal Act and Bill 130, The Sunshine Law, clearly outline in detail the responsibilities of Council pertaining to transparency. Having said that there is a distinction between a PUBLIC MEETING and a meeting OPEN to the public.

A PUBLIC MEETING could be a meeting dealing with zoning changes, official plans, information sessions etc. where the public will be asked to participate. Information will be provided by Council or their subject matter experts and the public will be asked for comments. The information provided by the public will be compiled to be considered by Council when formulating any decision that they may be required to make.

Council and Committee meetings are OPEN to the public. Neither The Municipal Act nor Bill 130 provides for participation at the Council or Committee meetings. The Municipal Act permits the public to observe the political process.

Council has developed a Procedural By-law that provides for a Question Period. People have the opportunity to ask a question, hopefully obtain an answer that day, and ask a follow up question for clarification. Questions are requested in writing so Staff or Councillors can have answers prepared so questions can be dealt with effectively. The purpose of Question Period is to clarify facts, positions Council has taken, matters of process, etc. If time permits a person may ask more than one question provided that privilege is not at the expense of someone that has not had an opportunity to ask a question. The Procedural By-law also allows for a Delegation of up to 15 minutes AT THE DISCRETION of the CAO. Delegations may be requested in writing.

In the past there have been letters submitted consisting of several pages and multiple questions. These will not be dealt with in Question Period. They will be distributed to the Council members as correspondence. If in the opinion of the CAO, they can be answered either by the CAO or with input from Council members they will be responded to in writing. If further clarification is required of the response, that can be done in question period OR a second letter sent. Both the request and response will be listed on the agenda as "Correspondence on File at the Clerk's Office. The CAO can bring letters to Council for referral to Professional Staff, if deemed necessary. Responses will not be rushed. That means they may not be dealt with by the first Council meeting after receipt of the letter.

If in the opinion of the CAO the request OR A PORTION of it should be made under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the requester will be advised in writing what part should be requested under that Act and the process to follow.

A review of the Procedural By-law will be completed by the end of the first quarter, unless for some unknown reason it cannot be. That review may change the procedure.