Policy No. GP-2026-04
COMMUNITY RECOGNITION & SYMBOLIC EXPRESSION POLICY
Motion: 2026-112

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

(a) ensure fairness, consistency, and neutrality in all forms of municipal recognition;
(b) avoid real or perceived endorsement of external organizations, causes, or campaigns;
(c) establish clear and enforceable standards for flags, proclamations, and symbolic expression; and

Policy Statement

The Town of Raymond shall remain neutral and shall not provide recognition or symbolic expression in support of external organizations, causes, campaigns, or events, except as expressly permitted under this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all forms of municipal recognition or symbolic expression, including:

(a) Public Proclamations;
(b) Flags and flag raising;
(c) Half-masting of flags;
(d) Lighting of buildings or facilities;
(e) Banners, signage, or displays on municipal property; and
(f) Any communication or action that may reasonably be interpreted as endorsement by the Town.

General Prohibition

The Town shall not:

(a) issue Public Proclamations;
(b) endorse or formally recognize external organizations, causes, campaigns, or events;
(c) permit the use of municipal assets for symbolic expression by external organizations; or
(d) raise or display flags representing external organizations or causes.

Permitted Municipal Expression

The Town may undertake only the following:

(a) Flags (Government-to-Government)
The display of flags at Town facilities is intended to reflect the formal governmental relationships and jurisdictional structure within Canada.

The Town shall fly only flags that represent:

(a) the Government of Canada;
(b) the Province of Alberta; and
(c) the Town of Raymond.

These flags represent the recognized orders of government with jurisdiction or authority within the Town and reflect the Town's role within Canada's constitutional and municipal governance framework.

(b) Indigenous Recognition (Government-to-Government Exception)
Notwithstanding the general prohibition on symbolic expression, the Town may display the Survivor's Flag on September 30 (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation).

This recognition is grounded in:

(a) the government-to-government relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Crown;
(b) the constitutional recognition of Indigenous rights under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982; and
(c) the establishment of a federally recognized statutory observance of national significance.

This exception is limited in scope and shall not be interpreted as permitting identity-based, advocacy-based, or organizational flag displays.

No other flag substitutions or displays shall be permitted.

(c) Victoria Sports Park – Facility Branding Exception
Notwithstanding the general prohibition on flags within this policy, the Town may permit the display of a Raymond High School "Comets" flag at the Victoria Sports Park (VSP) sportsfield complex, along side the Canadian, Albertan, and Raymond flags.

This exception is granted on the basis that:

(a) the VSP sportsfield complex is directly adjacent to Raymond High School and functions, in part, as a shared-use facility supporting school athletics;
(b) the Comets flag serves as site-specific facility identification and branding associated with the primary user group of the sportsfield; and
(c) the display does not represent a political, advocacy-based, or identity-based cause.

The Comets flag:

(a) may be displayed on a year-round basis at the VSP sportsfield complex only;
(b) shall not be displayed at Town Hall or other municipal facilities;
(c) shall not be interpreted as municipal endorsement beyond facility identification; and
(d) shall not create precedent for the display of other flags representing organizations, causes, campaigns, or community groups.

This exception is specific to the Raymond High School Comets flag at the VSP sportsfield complex and shall not be interpreted as a general exemption under this policy.

(d) Temporary Event-Based Government Flags

Notwithstanding the general flag restrictions, the Town may permit the temporary display of another national government flag at a municipally owned sports or recreation facility where:

(a) the display is directly associated with a scheduled athletic or cultural event hosted at the facility;
(b) a visiting team or delegation is officially representing that nation; and
(c) the flag is displayed solely for the duration of the event.

Such display:

(a) shall be limited to national government flags only;
(b) shall not include flags representing regions, organizations, or causes;
(c) shall be temporary and removed immediately following the event; and
(d) shall not be interpreted as political endorsement or symbolic recognition by the Town.

This provision does not permit ongoing or general display of foreign flags outside of event-specific circumstances.

(e) Half-Masting of Flags

The Town shall lower flags to half-mast only in accordance with the following:

(i) Mandatory Half-Masting

Flags shall be lowered to half-mast from the notification of death until the day following the funeral or memorial service for:

- *The Sovereign*
- *The currently serving Prime Minister of Canada*
- *Any former Prime Minister of Canada*
- *The currently serving Member of Parliament representing the Town of Raymond*
- *The currently serving Member of the Legislative Assembly representing the Town of Raymond*
- *Current members of Raymond Town Council*

- *Past Mayors of the Town of Raymond*

(ii) Designated Dates
Flags shall be lowered to half-mast on:
- *November 11 (Remembrance Day) — from 11:00 a.m. until sunset*
- *September 30 (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) — from sunrise to sunset*

(iii) Additional Circumstances (Controlled Discretion)
Council may, by formal resolution, direct that flags be lowered to half-mast only where:
- *the event is of national, provincial, or municipal governmental significance;*
- *the event does not constitute an advocacy campaign, awareness initiative, or organizational recognition; and*
- *the rationale is documented in the Council resolution.*

(iv) Locations
Half-masting shall occur at:
- *Raymond Town Hall*
- *Raymond Community Centre*
- *Raymond Pioneer Museum*

(f) Lighting of Municipal Buildings
The list of approved lighting observances is fixed and shall not be expanded except through formal amendment of this policy. The Town may illuminate municipal buildings only for the following purposes:

(i) Civic and National Observances
- *Canada Day*
- *Remembrance Day*

(ii) Seasonal and Cultural Traditions
- *Christmas*
- *Halloween*

(iii) Indigenous Recognition
- *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30)*

(iv) Prohibition
The Town shall not illuminate municipal buildings for:
- *external organizations;*
- *advocacy campaigns;*
- *awareness initiatives; or*
- *any purpose not expressly listed in this section.*

For greater clarity, the designation or recognition of an event, day, or cause by the Government of Canada, the Province of Alberta, or any other external body does not, in itself, qualify the event for municipal decorative lighting. Eligibility shall be determined solely based on the criteria established in this policy.

(e) Recognition of Observances

The Town may acknowledge federal or provincial statutory holidays or official observances through municipal communication or programming.

Recognition of observances does not include the display of flags, lighting, or symbols unless expressly permitted under this policy.

(f) Municipal Communications

The Town may communicate information that:

- *relates directly to municipal programs, services, or operations;*
- *is not initiated at the request of an external organization;*
- *or recognizes achievements of local groups representing the community at sporting, academic, or arts & cultural events etc.*

The Town shall not promote or highlight external awareness days, campaigns, or causes unless directly related to a Town program, service, or statutory requirement.

(g) Town-Led Initiatives

The Town may recognize initiatives that are:

- *initiated, funded, and operationally controlled by the Town; and*
- *directly related to municipal priorities or operations.*

Town-led initiatives shall not be used to provide symbolic recognition of external organizations, causes, or identity-based observances that would otherwise be prohibited under this policy.

Prohibited Symbolic Actions

The Town shall not provide symbolic recognition of external organizations or causes, including:

(a) flag raising for third parties;
(b) lighting of municipal buildings for external causes;
(c) installation of banners or signage promoting external campaigns; or
(d) ceremonial recognitions that may reasonably be interpreted as endorsement.

No Intake or Consideration of Requests

The Town will not accept, process, or respond to requests for:

- *proclamations;*
- *flag raising;*

- *symbolic recognition;*

from external organizations.

Council and Staff Conduct

(a) No member of Council shall issue or represent a proclamation or symbolic recognition on behalf of the Town except in accordance with this policy.

(b) Staff shall not communicate support or endorsement of external organizations or causes on behalf of the Town.

Neutrality and Equal Application

This policy applies equally to all organizations, causes, and groups, including those defined by protected grounds under human rights legislation, and does not create entitlement to recognition.

Compliance and Corrective Action

Where a contravention of this policy occurs, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate may direct corrective action, including the removal of materials, communications, or displays.

Interpretation and Paramountcy

(a) This policy shall be interpreted to maintain neutrality, consistency, and fairness.

(b) Where a conflict exists between this policy and any other Town policy, this policy prevails with respect to recognition and symbolic expression.

No Precedent

Past practices, decisions, or actions shall not create any entitlement or expectation of recognition under this policy. Nothing in this policy creates an obligation for the Town to provide recognition or symbolic expression in any circumstance.

Administration

This policy shall be administered by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate.

Repeal

Policy GP-2017-03 (Public Proclamation) is repealed.
Policy GP-2024-03 (Flag Policy) is repealed.