

City of Brampton Council Meeting, April 2 2025

Honorable Mayor, Councillors, and Distinguished Guests,

1. Hello My name is Andrea Baranowski, and It is an honor to be here today as a Brampton Resident , Polish Canadian and on behalf of the Canadian Polish Business Association, Manager of Community Engagement and Projects. I'm here today to seek your support for our upcoming Polish Flag Raising and celebrating Polish Heritage Month. It is Polish culture that has not only shaped the history of Europe but has also made it's mark right here in Brampton.
2. Brampton, a city of diversity, where cultures enrich our community. Polish Canadians have contributed significantly, playing essential roles whether as entrepreneurs, public servants, educators, or volunteers, bringing with them deep traditions, a strong work ethic, and an unyielding spirit of resilience.
3. Beyond cultural contributions, the economic ties between Poland and Canada have flourished over the years, reflecting a robust and mutually beneficial relationship. In 2023, Poland exported goods worth approximately \$2.18 billion to Canada, while Canadian exports to Poland amounted to about \$902 million. This dynamic trade relationship highlights the importance of our bilateral connections and the opportunities they present for both nations. Today, The Canadian Polish Business Association or CPBA is dedicated to helping Canada increase its trade relationship with Poland, and you can see the images of hard work over the last 2 years, shown in the slide image. Now more than ever, as Canada seeks quality workmanship, products and skills, it is in Canada's best interests to recognize, the solid trade relationships with Poland.
4. Polish culture is built upon centuries of history, art, and tradition. Poetic masterpieces and musical brilliance Poland has long been a land of intellectual and artistic greatness and genius. Its cultural depth can be seen in its elaborate folk dances, that tell of stories of courtship, pride and national identity.
5. The Polish diaspora is one of the largest in the world, estimating that over 20 million people of Polish ancestry live outside Poland. In Canada, according to the 2021 Census in Canada 982,820 individuals reported full or partial Polish heritage. This Polish community has significantly enriched Canada's multicultural landscape, we call it Polonia.
6. Polish families here in Ontario successfully assimilated long ago into the community and have been very proud Canadians since. Many of these Canadians may not demonstrate their Polish Heritage as they first identify themselves as proud Canadians, however they are of Polish descent.
4. In February 2024, the House of Commons recognized the significant contributions Polish Canadians have made to Canadian society, economy, politics, and culture by passing Motion M-75, officially designating May as Polish Heritage Month and May 3rd as Polish Constitution Day in Canada, so it is recognized Federally and Provincially, and today I would like The Council Of Brampton to Acknowledge it Municipally here in The City Of Brampton, this May 2025.

8. In the GTA, Polish Heritage Month is celebrated with various events that showcase Polish culture and traditions; The Roncesvalles Polish Festival, Mississauga Polish Days, The illumination of Niagara Falls in white and red, and Nathan Philips Square Polish Parade.

7. Here in Brampton, three (3) weeks ago, the CPBA began 2025 with a strong celebration of Canadian Polish business leadership by celebrating Our *Women in Business*, held at The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 609. This inspiring event was attended by our Polish Consulate General, our re-elected MPP Charmaine Williams, and Councillor Rod Power. It was a proud moment for the women of our Canadian Polish community, to showcase their resilience, ambition, and contributions of entrepreneurs and business leaders in Brampton and beyond.

8. A historic milestone for Brampton community was the **construction of St. Eugene de Mazenod Parish**, The Polish Catholic Church on Steeles Avenue, a dedicated place of worship built over 20 years ago. Leading up to its construction, it was St. Annes Parish Brampton that hosted the first Polish Masses in 1988. Then came blessings from Saint Pope John Paul II to build what we see today, a Beacon of Tradition and Value for Brampton as this cultural centre sits on over 12 acres of Property here in Brampton.

9. **On Saturday, May 10, 2025**, we would ask for your support in **joining our** celebration of this special occasion, **raising the Polish flag proudly at Brampton City Hall, at 1:45 PM**. Following the flag-raising ceremony, we welcome you to an enjoyable indoor reception, hosting local Polish food that defines Polish hospitality, and engaging with the Community.

10. Please come out and celebrate Poland's strong relationship with Canada, and honor The Contributions of Polish Canadians. Your presence would demonstrate a heartfelt "Thank You" to Polish Canadians for enriching Brampton's economic and social fabric. I ask our politicians and councilors today to uphold and recognize Polish heritage as a valued part of our multicultural community here in Brampton by **officially declaring the month of May as Polish Heritage Month**, and that you support initiatives that celebrate Polish traditions—be it through cultural festivals, educational programs, or partnerships with Polish organizations, so that, together we can honor and preserve the legacy of Polish Canadians in Brampton.

Thank you. Dziękuję bardzo! We look forward to your support .

Andrea Baranowski- Community Engagement & Projects For The Canadian Polish Business Association w