

From: David Wake
Sent: Sunday, November 8, 2020 8:25 PM
To: ASKCITY <ASKCITY@london.ca>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Governance Working Group

Please forward this message to the members of the Governance Working Group in advance of the group's meeting on Tuesday.

To the Chair and Members, Governance Working Group,

I have reviewed the report from the Clerk's office, entitled *Advisory Committee Review – Interim Report III*. As a resident of London with long-standing interest in the Natural Heritage System, I have several comments for consideration by the Governance Working Group.

The Administration report refers to consultation that has taken place during the review of advisory committees. I suggest that the consultation on this important issue has been extremely limited, and not at all effective. Now we are faced with an Administration report that brings forward some alternative approaches, provides no substantive analysis and evaluation of these alternatives, and jumps to hasty recommendations. There seems to be a focus on making a change whether it is warranted or not.

My immediate concern is with the proposed status of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee (EEPAC). Although I have never been a member of EEPAC, I have worked on many projects together with EEPAC members, and/or made submissions to Council on matters that involved the work of EEPAC. I have watched the work of EEPAC since its inception, and I am convinced that the Committee has done good and important work over many years. Working within its Terms of Reference, EEPAC regularly provides information and ideas that would not otherwise be available to staff.

I urge the Governance Working Group to retain EEPAC as a full advisory committee. If adjustments to some aspects of the committee's operations are required, then perhaps Council could consider refinements to the terms of reference for EEPAC. If there is any confusion about role and mandate, for example, then a few tweaks to the terms of reference should easily resolve the issues.

Section 2.1 of the Administration report makes reference to Expert Panels, with little explanation or rationale for why such panels would be an improvement over the current situation. The second paragraph of Section 2.1 seems to confuse the focused technical input provided by EEPAC, with the broad-based input from the general public. Both types of input are important, but the Natural Heritage System will be better protected when Council receives systematic technical advice from EEPAC.

Section 3.2 of the Administration report mentions the possibility of convening meetings of advisory committees "as they are required." That approach may be suitable for some advisory committees. My observation, however, is that one of the great strengths of EEPAC has been the existence of a consistent meeting schedule. A schedule of regular meetings assists city staff and consultants in planning their work schedules. Similarly, committee members are able to plan their time for review activities and meetings. A known and predictable schedule of meetings actually improves the

efficiency of the process. Perhaps different scheduling approaches would be workable for other advisory groups.

Section 3.3 of the report speaks again about the importance of appropriate Terms of Reference in identifying the role and mandate of advisory committees. Again, I suggest that a more productive step at this stage would be to simply review the Terms of Reference for EEPAC, and to continue working with this valuable committee.

EEPAC plays an important role in the municipal planning process. The committee has been exceptionally productive and beneficial to the city's interests. It is important for EEPAC to continue its operations under the same structure it used until its work was interrupted by the COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020.

Regards,

David Wake