

Feedback

Thank you for the opportunity to review the latest report from the Governance Working Group related to the City's Advisory Committees.

First, I want to start by thanking the City, and in particular the staff in the Clerk's office and other members of the Working Group, for tackling the governance issue during these extraordinary times. The experiences of the past year have highlighted for everyone that local government is an essential part of our lives as citizens. We have never been more aware of the need to hear from all segments of the community during the decision making process as well as the need for the municipality to be agile in its ability to respond to unforeseen challenges. Hats off to everyone at the City involved in serving the residents during the COVID emergency!

As a member of both the Agricultural Advisory Committee and London Advisory Committee on Heritage, I support the latest proposal for one "Advisory Committee" with an overall mandate tied to land use planning. In particular, the proposed Terms of Reference includes the flexibility for "sub-committees" or "working groups" comprised of committee and community members who can dive down into the details and then report back to the main group.

This approach works extremely well with LACH where, for example, the Stewardship Sub-committee researches designation requests and pre-reviews incoming heritage-related requests such as additions/removals from the heritage register. Working groups have been reviewing the Heritage Impact Assessments and planning related documents associated with the land use applications. The Education Sub-Committee helps with the development of heritage recognition signage and other recognition projects. These sub-groups allow for very thorough and thoughtful review as well as efficient time management when the overall committee meets.

This type of flexibility would also assist in dealing with rural/agriculture or urban agriculture issues when they arise.

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment.

I was invited by Audrey Pascual yesterday to share comments on a *May 17 Report to GWG Advisory Committee* item as well as the accompanying *Report Appendix A*. I will preface my comments by saying that I am new to the City's Advisory Committees, having been appointed by Council earlier this month as a member of the Trees and Forests Advisory Committee (TFAC). As a result, I haven't yet attended a meeting as a TFAC member. In any case, here are my two cents' worth for your consideration.

Copy editing:

- Since the *Report to GWG Advisory Committee* item is dated May 17, I sense that there may be an opportunity to tweak this draft. The last part of the sentence that starts at the bottom of page 2 and continues to the top of page 3 is muddled and therefore confusing to the reader. Consider amending "... or that would (require?) attendance of any resource members for all meetings."

Items of substance:

- What jumps out at me, not surprisingly, is that there is no mention in either document of TFAC. Similarly, I note that there is no mention of some other current ACs (e.g. Cycling, Heritage, etc.) Based on the "Background Information" at section 1.1 of the *Report to GWG Advisory Committee* item, I feel sure this isn't an oversight.
- I do note that in the "Terms of Reference for the Environmental Stewardship and Action Community Engagement Panel" (i.e. the sixth part of *Report Appendix A*) the fifth and sixth of seven bullet points in the Mandate section relate directly to the current work of TFAC. As a result, I gather that the core work of TFAC would be subsumed into the Environmental Stewardship and Action Community Engagement Panel.

- I think it is a challenge for TFAC, a 13-person Advisory Committee, to fulfil its current mandate. Advising on the *City of London Urban Forest Strategy* in itself is significant. As a result, I have a concern that the proposed 13-person Environmental Stewardship and Action Community Engagement Panel with an extremely broad mandate would be overwhelmed. Even if sub-committees and/or working groups were established by this Engagement Panel, there are limits to what 13 dedicated Engagement Panel volunteer members can generate in twelve meetings per year.
- Advisory Committees and Engagement Panels must of course add value for the City by fulfilling their mandates. Governance Working Group members should make doubly sure that any changes don't inadvertently point to a path of diminishing effectiveness of Advisory Committees and Engagement Panels.

Terms of Reference **Child Care and Early Years Advisory Committee**

Role

The role of an advisory committee is to provide recommendations, advice, and information to the Municipal Council on those specialized matters which relate to the purpose of the advisory committee.

Mandate

The Child Care and Early Years Advisory Committee provides information, advice and recommendations to Municipal Council through the Community and Protective Services Committee on **matters** (issues) **relevant to** (affecting) early learning and **(licensed)** child care of children such as, but not limited to:

- Special needs funding
- Resource centre funding
- Wage subsidy
- Child care fee subsidy
- Early Years programming
- Health and safety issues
- Implementation of provincial child care and early years policy framework, including priorities of affordability, access, quality, and responsiveness

In keeping with the Municipal Council's Strategic Plan principles, the Advisory Committee will report to City Council on facilitated input received from informed community partners on programs and ideas and to assist in enhancing the quality of life of the community in the support of families of young children.

The Advisory Committee also provides an opportunity for information sharing between Municipal, Provincial and Federal social service administrations and the child care community.

Composition

Voting Members

Up to thirteen members-at-large, representing the following sectors:

- Licensed Child Care Providers (at least seven **community-engaged** members representing the current composition of multi and single site child care and early learning sector for children, from infancy through 12 years of age, including representation from the French language child care sector, Licensed Home Child Care Sector, **Indigenous Child Care sector**);
- Fanshawe Early Childhood Education Program;
- EarlyON / On y va child and family centres; and
- Informed Community Members

Non-Voting Resource Group

At least one representative of each of the following"

- City of London, Child Care and Early Years division
- Local School Boards – TVDSB, LDCSB, CS Viamonde, CSC Providence
- Middlesex-London Health Unit

- Support Service for children with special needs

Sub-committees and Working Groups

No change

Conduct

No change

Meetings

No change

The working group recommends the following be sent to City staff for its consideration:

1. The reduction in membership to 19 is supported
2. Quorum as a requirement for committee business be maintained
3. The existing Terms of Reference be maintained with one alteration highlighted below
4. The existing name be maintained
5. As the technical expertise needed is sometimes hard to obtain, term limits may not be suitable. This could be addressed by one or more of the following:
 - a. No term limits;
 - b. Three council cycles (12 year limit);
 - c. Current limit be continued but extensions be permitted on the advice of the Chair
6. Given the specialized knowledge required for membership:
 - a. the City be asked to circulate application information to the relevant Department Chairs at Western University and Course Coordinators at Fanshawe. The Chair and Vice Chair can provide assistance in identifying the appropriate contacts;
 - b. the information circulated include a contact name from EEPAC so that potential applicants can ask questions about membership prior to applying.
7. In the selection process, consideration be given to asking the current Chair and Vice Chair for assistance.

Add to the existing mandate:

“to provide advice on any global (**e.g climate change**), regional or local issue related to the long-term sustainability of the Natural Heritage System.”

That the following actions be taken with respect to the staff report dated May 17, 2021, from C. Saunders, City Clerk, related to the Advisory Committee Review – Interim Report VI:

- a) the Governance Working Group BE ADVISED that the London Housing Advisory Committee (LHAC) endorses the continuation of an advisory committee dedicated to addressing housing and homelessness issues in the City of London;
 - b) the Governance Working Group BE REQUESTED to consider broadening the mandate of LHAC;
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In the “Advisory Committee Review – Interim Report VI” dated May 17, 2021 and included in the May TFAC agenda package, it was reported that the City is exploring the possibility of merging a number of current advisory committees together, including TFAC, into a new “Environmental Stewardship and Action Community Engagement Panel”.

We anticipate that trying to merge forestry in with such other “environmental” topics such as water, wastewater, waste, renewable energy, green building, transportation planning, etc. will have a number of major deleterious effects, including:

- 1) **Reduced participation & interest from the forestry community:** Few forestry experts will want to sit through meetings where likely 80% of the content being covered is so outside their area of professional interest or expertise. We also note that this seems to align badly with the stated purpose of the “community engagement panels” in the same report, which was described as convening for “a purpose more closely related to engagement on *specific* matters” (emphasis added)
- 2) **Dilution of expertise:** With such a broad mandate and no requirement for technical background or expertise, the panel will likely only have one or two members on it that have a strong background in any given area. This reduces the breadth of knowledge, as well as the volunteer time, that can be brought to bear on any one issue.
- 3) **Inability to effectively support the Urban Forest Strategy & Tree Planting Strategy:** The number of action items in these two strategies are most than sufficient to keep a committee busy for many, many years. Without a dedicated team working specifically on forestry issues, elements of the current TFAC mandate, such as:
 - providing advice on the development and monitoring of London's Urban Forest Strategy
 - providing advice on City's policies, by-laws and guidelines which effects treeswill be poorly effected and ill-served indeed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Assuming that the main issues are cost and municipal staff resources, we would strongly recommend that rather than attempting to merge all “environmental” issues together in one committee – a much, much broader mandate than other committees like “animal welfare” or “accessibility” or “agriculture” have – that the City explore a forestry committee that meets bi-monthly. Bi-monthly meetings would only cost half as much to run, reduce staff time obligations, and allow committee members to meet as working groups in the intervening months – likely dramatically increasing overall productivity as well. A bi-monthly schedule increases flexibility for participants and reduces the number of set meetings they must attend, so may also improve committee recruitment.
- 2) In order to ensure the committee has sufficient expertise to serve City goals related to the Urban Forest Strategy and municipal policy, we would recommend this modified TFAC be classified as an “Expert Panel” rather than a “Community Engagement Panel”.

“At Large” Configuration

Strengths

- Terms of Reference as currently written provide clear direction and convey a strong mandate (TMP/CMP)
- AC provides a much broader and considered platform to share ideas with Council
- Fosters a sense of independent thinking
- Promotes diversity and inclusion in group representation
- Ideas may come from the “bottom up” in addition to the “top down”
- Accountable to Council (via Civic Works Committee) vs. Civic Administration
- Integrated leadership amongst Council, Staff and AC (vs. Straight-line accountability)

- The parliamentary org structure promotes order, transparency and good organizational governance
- Promotes and sustains relationship building amongst like-minded Londoners
- Meets and/or exceeds the requisite level of SMEs in the committee makeup, often organically
- Demonstrated three-year track record of success in the case of TAC
- A strong Work Plan process was developed by TAC which is outcome-driven and aligned to London Plan (Strategic Vision vs. Tactical)

Weaknesses

- The sometimes, the overly long cycle times of the formal process often preclude expedited matters from being fully explored...TAC has learned that a strong WP process can often mitigate this risk...but not fully
- Information flows slowly and often incompletely to/from Council due to barriers inherent in the parliamentary process
- AC mandates as outlined in their TORs are not always fully respected by the Civic Administration
- The Work Plan process, while providing structure, may sometimes have the effect of stifling new idea generation on topics not aligned to strategic interests of Council vs. the needs/desires of the Public
- The “At Large” pilot was established without success criteria and metrics for proper evaluation at the conclusion of the pilot period.
- The recruitment (Striking Committee) and selection processes (Council) need to be improved and focussed on expertise/merit vs. reward/vanity

Opportunities

- Continue TAC in its current AC structure (with or without CAC) and undertake a proper comparative analysis which may drive improvement opportunities and models for those Advisory Committees which will remain in place.
- Recommendations regarding refinements of the recruitment and/or selection process for remaining ACs may result
- Introduction of enhanced analytics of AC effectiveness may result and be leveraged for future iterations/pilots/improvement initiatives

Threats (Risks)

- Lack of support from Council
- Time-boxing by Civic Administration
- Poor assumptions/attitudes amongst many current AC members regarding mandate, attendance, due diligence, dedication and work group participation)
- Lack of skills development and succession planning for AC members threatening process sustainability
- No process to document understanding acquired to enhance the knowledge base of ACs
- No exit interview process (Early Warning System of AC dysfunction)
- Entropy associated with competing special interests
- Conflicts of interest

Community Engagement Panel

Strengths

- In effect the CEP, as envisioned, is simply an expanded, topic-driven PIC process utilizing a more flexible, “focus-group” structure lead by the Civic Administration
- Since this approach is as yet untested, see the “Opportunities” slide for potential strengths.

Weaknesses

- Work planning will not be leveraged to provide focus and alignment to the London Plan and TOR
- Maintaining two different structures (AC and CEP) may not drive the expected benefits/efficiencies
- The CEP process and structure is still not entirely clear because it remains under development
- CEPs tend to be subject-focussed and steered (Command & Control vs. Collaboration) which eliminates the opportunity for free and independent thinking/input from the community (Tactical vs. Visionary)
- The level of transparency of the process from the point of view of the public (published meeting agendas, minutes, video) has not been established and/or properly evaluated.
- The CEP model has a lack of organizational structure and mature finesse and is largely ad hoc (Tactical)
- The pilot is being undertaken without criteria/metrics for proper evaluation at the conclusion of the pilot period (same mistake as with the “At Large” pilot)
- The model lacks a robust track record of success (going operational without the benefit testing)

Opportunities *

- Expand the level of diversity and inclusion of the target audience on questions/issues requiring feedback to Council
- Reduced the cycle time for feedback to Council on time-sensitive matters, though the feedback may be much narrower in scope
- Enhance community engagement and feedback (Diversity and Inclusion)

* (Untested and therefore purely theoretical)

Threats (Risks)

- Special interest group bias could become a dominant feature of this model
- Pre-qualified lists of key individuals and/or special interest groups may be employed by Civic Administration as a pre-screen (thus undermining the benefits of convening a broader audience)
- Engagement fatigue (Public)
- Negativity on the part of Council and/or Civic Administration (due to Overwork/Disinterest/Stress associated with recent Covid-19 protocols)
- Negative reaction in Traditional/Social Media

Feedback on the Proposed Advisory Committee Restructuring

Urban League of London Background

The Urban League is an umbrella group whose members include neighbourhood associations, community groups and individuals from across the City of London, Ontario. The restructuring of the Advisory Committees is a topic near and dear to the Urban League's heart as we strongly support and encourage community engagement in municipal decisions, and Advisory Committees have long provided a structured environment for this type of input.

With that in mind, the Urban League of London Board and members are open to change. We appreciate the opportunities to provide input on this restructuring, and appreciate the ongoing reflections that staff have offered by way of reports to Council on this topic. **We are eager to see a final resolution on this file, one that balances better engagement for residents and the need from Council and staff to have broad and expert feedback on municipal decisions.**

Through discussions and meetings with various League members (individuals, Sherwood Forest, London Urban Beekeepers Collective, Carling Heights, Northridge and Byron Community Organization and League Board members), the following feedback has been compiled regarding the proposed changes to the Advisory Committees at the City of London. We have themed them into specific categories for ease of reading. There are items that have been bolded as a **recommendation** and a few items that are **questions** for the Clerk's Office.

Streamlined Approach for Residents to Understand Engagement Options

- Currently it is difficult for the community to understand how to engage "properly" with City Hall. The move towards having AC's and CEP offers the potential for broader participant and inclusion of resident's voices in City Hall planning. It does not eliminate other barriers to participation however, and can be somewhat difficult to understand. In order for residents' input to be relevant and successfully received by Council and staff, residents need to understand how they can offer input to Council.
- **Recommendation:** A Community Engagement Office, with dedicated staff resources, BE CREATED to ensure full implementation of the Community Engagement Policy and all related policies and programs. This recommendation comes from the 2012 [Community Engagement Task Force Phase II Report](#) (see page 10)

Feedback on the Proposed Advisory Committee Restructuring

- This Community Engagement Office would run a Civic 101 course, which would explain what AC's and CEP's are, as well as a variety of ways residents can get involved with decision making. It would answer common resident questions, like how to change a bylaw or have input on the budget process. ([Community Engagement Task Force Phase II Report](#) (see page 10))
- City staff provide annual training to any new advisory committee members and citizen engagement panel members regarding: function of the committees, role of the Chair etc.

Transportation / Cycling Committee Restructuring

- The concern of insufficient representation of “regular” cyclists can be overcome by making a recommendation on committee membership. For example, “a representative who uses cycling as their primary means of transportation who is not a member of an advocacy group”
- **Recommendation:** the terms of reference be broadened to be inclusive of all forms of transportation (walking, biking, busing, driving)

Value of an Expert vs. General Community Insight

- **Recommendation:** greater clarity about the value of engagement in Advisory Committees and Community Engagement Panels so that the expectations of volunteers, City staff, and Councillors are squared.
- Do we wish to attract and engage people with a high level of knowledge (through lived experience and/or academic learning and/or professional qualifications) as a way to cultivate their engagement and as a way for the whole City to benefit from their insight; and/or is the priority to make accessible opportunities for civic volunteerism; or is something else the priority?

Housing Advisory Committee

- Affordable housing has for decades ranked as one of the most challenging problems facing Ontario municipalities, due in no small part to political decisions made by higher levels of government (including withdrawal of funding and downloading) in the 1990s, and exacerbated in recent decades by the commodification of housing in international financial markets.
- Although the crisis will only start to be resolved when positive change is undertaken by provincial and federal governments (in the form of increased funding and recognition of responsibility) municipalities can continue to play a role, for instance by taxation and zoning rules, as well as by innovative strategies such as community land trusts.
- As the city employs its best efforts to chip away at the backlogged demand for affordable housing, the crisis grows; it would therefore be short sighted to eliminate a committee specifically directed to consider housing issues and to facilitate public input to city

Feedback on the Proposed Advisory Committee Restructuring

council. The city would benefit from creating a means to engage citizen voices and to fulfill the mandate of the London Housing Advisory Committee (LHAC), as currently published on the city's website. We need the energy and expertise of researchers, homelessness and housing workers and activists, people with lived experience, developers, builders and citizens-at-large, including those across the generations and from diverse ethnic and marginalized communities.

- **Recommendation:** This goal would best be achieved by means of a dedicated engagement panel, directed to fulfill the mandate of the current housing advisory committee. The panel would provide a forum for robust debate, generation of ideas and, ultimately, informed recommendations to council on the path forward. To that end, a budget in line with that of the current LHAC would allow the panel to hold online or in-person mini-conferences from time to time on various housing topics. Continued valued and informative input from staff, who currently attend LHAC meetings as non-voting members, would be important.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Structure and Process of AC's and CEP's

- DIACC - issue with terms of reference because the TOR looks like there will be very little submission from Council to DIACC
 - **Recommendation:** Specifically outline how or when items are sent for review to DIACC
- **Recommendation:** that the structure and process be examined by the City of London's Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Division, perhaps also referencing work done with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities on the Diverse Voices for Change Project. We are hopeful that the City of London will apply a racial, ethnic and gender equity lens to this important form of community engagement, revising the application process to solicit applications from a diverse population that more accurately reflects our community, and removing barriers to participation (such as reviewing the timing of meetings and facilitating the provision of childcare, to list a few examples) in order to attract contributions from a broader range of citizens with professional and lived experience to share.

Addressing Barriers to Advisory Committee Participation

- **Recommendations:**
 - Lower age restriction to 16
 - Any resident of London may apply to join an Advisory Committee or Community Engagement Panel (ie. doesn't have to be a registered voter)
 - MISSING - inclusion of feedback from citizen engagement report from 8-10 years ago (ie. having childcare during AC's or CEP's times)

Question for Clerk's Office staff regarding the 2 Year Experiment

Feedback on the Proposed Advisory Committee Restructuring

- Beginning in June, 2019, the Advisory Committee composition, using Transportation as an example, was changed from a majority of 9 Representatives from Organizations and 4 Members at Large to 13 Members at Large, all voting members.
- **Question:** What data has been gathered over the last 2 years, compiled from existing members and exit interviews from any member that had left before their end of term, to determine the success, strength and weaknesses of the 2 yr. experiment, to warrant continuing with the current composition?

Non-Voting Resource Group

- Original Representatives from Organizations, all voting members under the former structure, are now being included in the new Non-Voting Group.
- **Question:** What guidelines are being established to assist Voting Members, new to the Committee, to determine which Non-Voting representatives should be called upon to attend & provide input?

Being A Valued Part of the City's Engagement Process

- **Recommendation:** Chair of the Standing Committee meet with the Chairs of the various Advisory Committees or Engagement Panels once or twice a year to ensure the Advisory Committee or Engagement Panel is meeting the expectations of the various Standing Committees and receive feedback on how to work better together