



CITIZEN COMMITTEE REPORT

To:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
From:	Robert Fyfe, Chair Hamilton Veterans Committee (to be signed by the Chair)
Date:	March 11, 2014
Re:	Revised Mandate and Membership for the Hamilton Veterans Committee (HVC14-001) (City Wide)

Recommendation:

- (a) That the mandate of the Hamilton Veterans Committee be revised to –

Reporting to Council, through the appropriate standing committee, the Hamilton Veterans Committee oversees the planning and delivery of military remembrance and commemoration activities on behalf of the City of Hamilton. When directed by Council, the Committee will provide input on projects and issues that are of concern to Hamilton Veterans.

- (b) That the membership of the Hamilton Veterans Committee be revised to –

Up to 9 members of which one may be a member at large.

Members are required to be a City of Hamilton resident AND one of the following:

A veteran; OR

A current or former member of the Canadian Forces; OR

A current or former member of the Canadian Forces Reserves.; OR

Meet the requirement of a member at large.

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A member (at large) is required to demonstrate a special interest in veterans' projects and issues through their work in the community

Background

The Hamilton Veterans Committee (The Committee) has been a volunteer committee of City Council since 1972.

Current Mandate: Currently the Committee meets monthly and provides City Council with advice on "all matters affecting the veterans of the City of Hamilton that fall within Council's jurisdiction".¹

Current Membership: The membership of the committee is made up of seven members selected by City Council. Members sit on the Committee for a four year term but may serve more than one term. Membership requirement is limited to a military veteran and resident of Hamilton but may be of any age or place of service².

In recent years the Committee has become concerned that its activities are not well understood by the community and that its current membership is not sustainable under the existing membership criteria. At a meeting of the Hamilton Veterans Committee held on Wednesday, November 18, 2009, Culture Division staff was directed "to research best practices within other municipalities regarding veterans committees, with the goal of potentially creating a new or revising the current mandate of the Hamilton Veterans Committee at a future meeting."

Best Practice Study Results

A report, presented to the Hamilton Veterans Committee on September 13, 2011, concerning research into best practices concluded that not one of the fifteen municipalities researched (Appendix A to Report HVC14-001) had a municipal veterans committee with a similar or related mandate to the Hamilton Veterans Committee. Military-related committees were found in other communities but were focused on specific projects (e.g. – memorial gardens) or had mandates that were more broadly military related and not focused on veterans. In most cases, veterans' issues and remembrance type activities were led by community groups (e.g. - regimental associations, legions and military family resource centres).

The research also showed that when municipalities were involved in veterans' issues, it was in response to issues brought forward to Council by the community (e.g. - parking privileges, dedication of parks and memorials and the renaming of streets). Municipalities are commonly partners in community-led committees and initiatives

¹ Hamilton Veterans Committee Mandate, November 2010

² Ibid.

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such as Remembrance Day. However, they are not typically the lead on a veteran project.

Analysis/Rationale:

Interview Process and Key Findings

As the next step in its planning, the Hamilton Veterans Committee requested staff assistance to review the Committee's mandate and membership criteria. Staff developed a review process which included one on one interviews with members of the Committee as well as key stakeholders in the community.

Sixteen individuals were identified by staff and key stakeholders as essential interviewees for the project and a total of fourteen of the essential interviews were successfully completed by November 29, 2013 (Appendix B to Report HVC14-001). Five of the interviewees are current members or advisors to the Hamilton Veterans Committee and the remaining nine are stakeholders from the military community. The results of the fourteen interviews can be summarized with these key findings from the interviews.

- The Hamilton Veterans Committee's roles and responsibilities are not well understood by the broader military community.
- The Hamilton Veterans Committee is recognized as the organization responsible for Remembrance Day activities in the City of Hamilton.
- Remembrance Day activities need to be more inclusive of personnel currently serving in the military.
- The current membership of the Hamilton Veterans Committee does not reflect the breadth and depth of Hamilton's military community.
- The current membership model for the Hamilton Veterans Committee is not sustainable.

Hamilton Veterans Committee's Recommendation

The findings of the interviews conducted with members of the committee and key stakeholders from the military community were presented to the Hamilton Veterans Committee at their general meeting, Tuesday, January 14, 2014.

The Committee concluded that a focused mandate on the planning and delivery of remembrance and commemoration activities most appropriately reflected its role and simplified communication to the community about the Committee's purpose.

The Committee also concluded that a more inclusive approach to member recruitment as well as enhanced collaboration with key organizations from the military community

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were necessary to attract new members in the future. The Committee is recommending that, in addition to veterans, that there be an expansion of eligible members to include currently or formerly serving members of the military and a member at large.

An increase of the Committee size from 7 to a maximum of 9 is also recommended to assist the Committee's ability to meet its deliverables and consistently achieve meeting quorum. .

At their general meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2014 the Hamilton Veterans Committee passed a motion to recommend the revised mandate and membership for the Committee that are included in the recommendations to Council for consideration.

Appendix A to Report HVC14-001 – Municipalities Reviewed for Best Practices

Appendix B to Report HVC14-001 – Interview Participants

EW/ro