



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 9, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee (CES15053) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community & Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee be established;
- (b) That the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix A to Report CES15053 be approved;
- (c) That the City's selection process be initiated to appoint citizen members to the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee; and,
- (d) That staff be directed to report back to the Emergency & Community Services Committee with a base budget submission request, to be referred to the 2016 budget process, for the newly created Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 10, 2015, City Council passed Item 17 of Report 15-014 of the General Issues Committee – Review of the City of Hamilton's Advisory Committees (CM15007), which contained the following direction to staff:

- “(c) *That Housing Services Division staff report back to the Emergency & Community Services Committee in the Fall 2015, reallocating the roles and responsibilities respecting emergency shelter and tenant matters of the Food and Shelter Advisory Committee and the Tenant Advisory Committee to a new formed citizen group with a mandate to more broadly address housing and homelessness issues.*”

Report CES15053 responds to this direction with the proposed terms of reference for a new Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee (“HHAC”) that includes the following mandate:

- Communicate and work to address the needs of citizens within the community for whom barriers exist to accessing safe, suitable, and affordable housing, including the supports needed to enable citizens to obtain and retain their homes, and;
- Support the City of Hamilton’s 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan by providing information, advice, and recommendations to the Emergency & Community Services Committee regarding the Action Plan’s successful and implementation.

Through discussions with members of the Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee, the Food and Shelter Advisory Committee and Public Health staff, it became apparent that the roles and responsibilities of both committees would be better addressed through the development of a new food advisory committee. It was recommended that staff report to the Board of Health in the Fall of 2015 with information regarding a new food advisory committee with the mandate to address all aspects of food including short term relief, capacity building, and the broader food system.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

A nominal budget submission will be made to cover committee member meeting expenses. It is not expected that this budget request will exceed an annual amount of \$1,000.

Staffing:

The staff liaison necessary to support the HHAC will be accommodated within the existing Housing Services Division staff complement.

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with Report CES15053.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On July 10, 2015, City Council passed Item 17 of Report 15-014 of the General Issues Committee – Review of the City of Hamilton’s Advisory Committees (CM15007). Staff undertook a review of the current structure and function of Hamilton’s Advisory Committees. Through discussions with the Tenant Advisory Committee; the Food & Shelter Advisory Committee and Housing Services Division staff, it became apparent that the roles and responsibilities of both committees would be better addressed

through the development of a new citizen group with a mandate to address broader housing and homelessness issues from a citizen perspective.

The Tenant Advisory Committee (“TAC”) is a volunteer citizen committee established by Council on May 28, 2003. The TAC was established based on discussions with the community in recognition of the unique issues pertaining to tenants that could not be adequately addressed in existing housing forums. The TAC informed Council (through the Emergency and Community Services Committee) of issues and policies that impact tenants.

The Food and Shelter Advisory Committee (“FSAC”) is a longstanding advisory committee which informed Council (through the Emergency and Community Services Committee) of issues or policies that impact persons or communities for whom barriers exist to income security, food security and access to safe, accessible, adequate shelter. The FSAC also provided a forum for intergovernmental and community partner discussions on these matters and ensured that the perspectives of persons and communities who are experiencing these barriers are taken into consideration in the review of relevant City policies and programs.

In December 2013, City Council approved the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (“Action Plan”) for Hamilton (Report CS11017(c)). The Action Plan is a 10-year solution-focused, person-centred plan with established outcomes, targets and strategies for addressing affordable housing and homelessness issues in the community. The Action Plan contains specific strategies that address, among other broader housing-related issues, the unique tenant-related issues that formed the mandate for TAC and the shelter-related mandate of FSAC.

The Action Plan was the resulting efforts of three years of work in collaboration with community partners and was informed by the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group – a committed expert group made up of representatives from various sectors that advise on issues relating to affordable housing and homelessness prevention, primarily as these issues relate to their various programs and areas of expertise. Initially formed to help develop the Action Plan, it now has a renewed focus on advising and assisting the implementation of the Plan. However, the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group is sector-based and does not have a strong citizen perspective. A stronger citizen perspective is critical to successful and meaningful implementation of the Action Plan. The mandate of the new HHAC will complement the work already being done and provide a greater connection between citizens and the important issue of affordable housing and homelessness prevention.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

City of Hamilton By-law 14-300 – A By-law to Govern the Proceedings of Council and Committees of Council

City of Hamilton By-law 14-300 authorizes Council to establish advisory committees or task forces as may be needed from time to time in response to specific matters. The HHAC is subject to the provisions of City of Hamilton By-law 14-300.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Report CES15053 relies, in part, on the consultation undertaken for the purposes of preparing Report CM15007 – “Review of the City of Hamilton’s Advisory Committees” as that consultation specifically related to the review of the Tenant Advisory Committee and the Food and Shelter Advisory Committee. Specifically, that consultation included a review of the advisory committees’ respective mandates and Terms of Reference, previous reports to Council, the Advisory Committee Procedural Handbook, best practices from other municipalities, Hamilton’s Engagement Committee’s Public Engagement Charter. This was followed by consultations with Advisory Committees, staff liaisons and staff from the Housing Services Division.

The Office of the City Clerk was consulted on Report CES15053 and the development of the mandate and terms of reference for the HHAC and comments received have been reviewed and incorporated as necessary.

The sector-based Housing and Homelessness Planning Group was consulted on the development of the mandate, terms of reference and composition of the HHAC. This group provided feedback on ensuring that the HHAC has a mandate that will complement the work already being done. This feedback has been considered and incorporated as necessary.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

The HHAC supports and strengthens the commitment to engaging citizens in the complex and varied issues relating to the provision of affordable housing and homelessness prevention. Strategy 5.9 of the Action Plan reads:

5.9 Ensure that clients/participants/tenants are meaningfully engaged in planning and decision making in the areas that impact their lives. This includes (a) a model for citizen engagement which will be applied to the Action Plan implementation phase and the Housing Services Division; and (b) citizen engagement as part of housing and homelessness service funding relationships with community based agencies.

The Action Plan was developed by engaging hundreds of people with varied experiences. The next step is to build mechanisms that engage people meaningfully in the implementation of the Action Plan in an ongoing way. The Housing Services Division currently engages people in its work through many ways, including:

- Various citizen advisory committees, including the former Tenant Advisory Committee and the emergency shelter mandate of the Food and Shelter Advisory Committee;
- Periodic consultation events;
- Housing and Homelessness Planning Group, and;
- Through collaboration with broader citizen engagement models such as the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, Hamilton's Plan for an Age-Friendly City, Hamilton Engagement Committee.

The importance of engaging a wide-range of citizens to reflect the various perspectives and experiences that need to be included in decision making around affordable housing and homelessness prevention issues cannot be overstated. The HHAC Committee will have a broader mandate and specific objectives that expands upon the work of the former Tenant Advisory Committee and Food and Shelter Advisory Committee.

The mandate of the HHAC is to:

- Communicate and work to address the needs of citizens within the community for whom barriers exist to accessing safe, suitable, and affordable housing, including the supports needed to enable citizens to obtain and retain their homes; and,
- Support the City of Hamilton's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan by providing information, advice, and recommendations to the Emergency and Community Services Committee regarding its successful and meaningful implementation.

The following objectives have been established for the HHAC to facilitate its efforts in achieving the mandate.

1. Assist with the coordination and implementation of Council approved recommendations, including the City of Hamilton's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan;
2. Ensure that recommendations regarding issues relating to people who are experiencing homelessness or who may be at risk of becoming homeless are brought forward to Council in a timely manner;
3. Devise and recommend to Council innovative and preventative measures to assist in addressing homelessness within the community;

4. Identify emerging trends, potential gaps and best practices in emergency shelter needs;
5. Provide Council and staff with information, advice, and recommendations about residential landlord and tenant issues and policies that would improve the overall well-being of tenants in Hamilton and support landlords in the provision of safe, quality, and affordable rental units;
6. Identify housing-related supports available in the community and facilitate relationship-building between community partners, citizens and government to ensure that people have the individualized supports needed to help them obtain and retain housing;
7. Educate the community about homelessness and affordable housing issues through regular and accurate reporting to the Emergency & Community Services Committee;
8. Respond to requests and direction from staff and Council; and,
9. Collaborate and cooperate with other City of Hamilton committees and community groups doing work around issues that impact homelessness and affordable housing to stay apprised of relevant initiatives and contribute information and advice as needed.

The HHAC will be comprised of 12-15 Council appointed volunteer citizens with experience or strong interest in homelessness prevention and the provision of affordable housing. The selection process will ensure that citizens with backgrounds or experiences that reflect a unique or relevant perspective to any aspect of the homelessness and housing continuum are considered for membership. In accordance with the core values of the Action Plan, it is critical that recruitment be undertaken in an inclusionary manner to ensure that members of the HHAC reflective the diverse make-up of the Hamilton community as much as possible.

In accordance with the direction in Report CM15007, two (2) members of City Council will also be appointed as representatives to the HHAC. The term of the members of the HHAC will be for four years to coincide with the term of City Council. However, the initial term of the members of the HHAC will be three years to coincide with the remainder of the current term of City Council.

Link with the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group

The Housing and Homelessness Planning Group (“Planning Group”) is made up of committed experts from various sectors which deal, directly or indirectly, with housing and homelessness related issues. The Planning Group provides specific feedback and advice on the work related to implementation of the Action Plan, primarily as it relates to

the various programs and functions of our community agencies. In addition, through specific sub working groups, members are directly involved in implementation of some of the strategies of the Action Plan. However, despite representing a wide range of community sectors, there is not a dedicated citizen voice on the Planning Group.

The HHAC represents an opportunity to enhance the work of the Planning Group by providing a dedicated and organized citizen perspective. Therefore, it is envisaged that the work of the Planning Group and the HHAC will complement one another by connecting and integrating the citizen perspective with the sector representatives. The Housing Services Division is the liaison for both groups and, as such, will ensure that each groups respective work plans and resources are coordinated and well-managed to avoid duplication, identify opportunities and most appropriately respond to various housing and homelessness issues.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.
- 1.6 Enhance Overall Sustainability (financial, economic, social and environmental).

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

- 2.2 Improve the City's approach to engaging and informing citizens and stakeholders.

Strategic Priority #3

Leadership & Governance

WE work together to ensure we are a government that is respectful towards each other and that the community has confidence and trust in

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CES15053 – Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee
Terms of Reference