



Hamilton

MINUTES

LGBTQ Advisory Committee

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

City Hall, 71 Main Street West, Room 192

Present: James Diemert, Lisa-Marie Johnston, Cameron Kroetsch (Chair), Jake Maurice, Violetta Nikolskaya (Vice Chair), Terri Wallis, Maureen Wilson (City Council Appointee)

Regrets: Autumn Getty (Recording Secretary), Freja Gray, Kyle Weitz

Absent: Kristin Cavarzan

Staff: Pauline Kajiura (Staff Liaison)

Guest: Rebecca Sutherns, Sage Solutions

1. Welcome / Introductions

Committee members and guests were welcomed and there was a round of introductions. C. Kroetsch took roll call.

2. Land Acknowledgement

V. Nikolskaya provided a Land Acknowledgement.

3. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

None

4. Procedural Business

4.1 Motion to Approve the Agenda

(L. Johnston / T. Wallis)

That the LGBTQ Advisory Committee approve the agenda for today's meeting as distributed.

CARRIED

4.2 Motion to Approve the Minutes of September 15, 2020

(L. Johnston / T. Wallis)

That the LGBTQ Advisory Committee approve the minutes from its September 15, 2020 meeting as distributed.

CARRIED

5. Delegation Requests

5.1 Rebecca Sutherns, Sage Solutions with respect to the City of Hamilton's Hate Prevention and Mitigation Initiative (see attachments) for today's meeting

(L. Johnston / J. Diemert)

That the LGBTQ Advisory Committee approve the delegation request for today's meeting.

CARRIED

6. Delegations / Presentations

6.1 Rebecca Sutherns, Sage Solutions with respect to the City of Hamilton's Hate Prevention and Mitigation Initiative (see attachments)

Discussion - The delegate provided their phone number and email address for members in case they wished to provide further feedback after the meeting; (519) 994-0064; rebecca@sage-solutions.org. The delegate also stated that these comments would either be incorporated into or appended to the report that would go to a future meeting of the General Issues Committee.

Members of the Committee had several questions and comments for the delegate including the following.

- Why do you believe these recommendations will be taken up by City Council and how do you think it will follow through on your recommendations? How will the City of Hamilton be held accountable for implementing these recommendations? Members expressed a desire for accountability mechanisms to be embedded in the recommendations
- Suggestions that the report back might include unpacking "hate" and that this language may not be sufficient to describe what is happening in Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities and that it needs to include language that gets to the nuances surrounding hate including those things that support or foster it, including silence.
- Concerns that the methodology was being challenged by members of Council with expressions from

members that the final version of the report respond to those challenges with specific reference to cultures and climates in Hamilton that may prevent participation and an analysis around why the results may be atypical.

- Members expressed concerns around having to continue to provide information about their lived experiences to the City of Hamilton. Members said that they have been doing the work of testifying for decades and that many members of Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities have been speaking out online and through social media. What tools are being used by the City to find, read, evaluate, and address those comments and to take them as serious feedback from communities?
- Where in this reporting are the Advisory Committees being used in their advice-giving capacity? How is the City of Hamilton reaching out to those on Advisory Committees that represent communities impacted by "hate"?

7. Regular Business

7.1 Motion to Accept the Resignation of K. Cavarzan from the Committee

(V. Nikolskaya / T. Wallis)

That the LGBTQ Advisory Committee accept the resignation of K. Cavarzan from the Committee.

(J. Diemert / L. Johnston)

That the LGBTQ Advisory Committee defer this motion to its next meeting.

DEFERRED

Discussion - Staff advised the Committee that the proper paperwork may not have been submitted and would like to reach out to K. Cavarzan before proceeding.

7.2 Motion to Accept the Resignation of M. Ray-Borsc from the Committee

(T. Wallis / L. Johnston)

That the LGBTQ Advisory Committee accept the resignation of M. Ray-Borsc from the Committee.

CARRIED

8. Discussion Items

8.1 Outstanding Business List

No discussion

8.2 Update from Working Group on Committee Selection

No discussion

8.3 Update from Working Group on the Needs Assessment

No discussion

8.4 Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Members of Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Communities

Members expressed seeing a housing and homelessness crisis as it pertains to mental health and youth, in-person support, access to walk-in clinics, access to physicians, domestic violence in isolation, and an overall concern about the lack of services in Hamilton for members of Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities.

There are complex needs in our communities related to housing including the costs, difficulties with moving during a pandemic, full shelters and shelter hotels, and the deteriorating situation with encampments throughout the city. These needs are felt especially keenly for members of Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities that have been made even more vulnerable by this pandemic. Specifically, there are concerns regarding safe spaces and shelters, an increase of domestic and other violence, and a complete lack of safe space for members of Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities.

References made to the McMaster Labour Studies *Mapping the Void* report and comments that for many people home is not a safe space and this increases precarity in the “home” environment. Members hoped that the City of Hamilton could support people who are experiencing this.

The pandemic has been hard on everybody but particularly for people with visible and invisible disabilities. Many people in the disability community are stigmatized and assumed not to have “sexuality”. For this and other reasons, it’s difficult for disabled members of Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities to find space in these communities and even harder during a pandemic where the benefit of connections in person has

been lost. For some, especially those who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, speech-impaired, blind, and partially sighted, masks have increased difficulty with communication and the ability to form connections with others during the pandemic.

8.5 Integrity Commissioner Report and the Formal Reprimand of the LGBTQ Advisory Committee Chair by City Council

Note - Minutes were not taken for all parts of this discussion as the livestream was interrupted due to the host's sudden loss of an internet connection. The meeting was hosted by City staff.

C. Kroetsch read a statement (attached).

Members of the Committee expressed serious concern about the process, the chilling effect that all of this will have on Advisory Committees, and support for the Chair during this time.

Councillor Maureen Wilson made lengthy remarks, most of which were lost due to the interruption of the livestream, but which addressed concerns with the Mayor's response to the Integrity Commissioner's complaint and regret for participating in decisions that had an impact on the Chair, the LGBTQ Advisory Committee, and Advisory Committees generally. Members of the Committee thanked Councillor Wilson for accepting responsibility for the way she voted and for speaking out at the meeting with regret.

Other members of the Committee spoke at length about their concerns with respect to how this would be viewed as an attempt to limit speech and to stifle the ability of Advisory

Committee's to give advice to City Council. Particular attention was given to the ongoing dialogue about the differences between "advocacy", "advice", and "activism" at City Council. A member suggested that our existence as members of an Advisory Committee representing Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities is an act of advocacy in and of itself and that the implications around this artificial separation between advocacy, advice, and activism is harmful.

Members expressed serious concerns with respect to comments made by Councillor Terry Whitehead on Twitter, specifically his suggestion that the powers of the Integrity Commissioner might be used to file complaints against organizations (including the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion) and specific individuals.

Members encouraged one another to practice self-care after what was an emotionally impactful discussion.

8.6 New Policy on Delegations for Advisory Committees

The Chair explained that he had received communications via staff from the Office of the City Clerk outlining a new process for delegations from members of Advisory Committees to other governing bodies. In general, the new policy prevents delegations from members of Advisory Committees to other bodies (apart from the Standing Committee to which the LGBTQ Advisory Committee reports and the General Issues Committee).

A new policy has been developed which states that any such requests to delegate must be approved not only by the body to which the delegation is being requested, but also by City Council.

No information was provided as to the rationale for this decision or if it would become part of the official Advisory Committee Handbook.

The Chair expressed disappointment with this as several requests to delegate to other bodies had already been approved by the LGBTQ Advisory Committee that the Office of the City Clerk had now formally rescinded. It was not clear to the Chair if City Council had provided this direction or if this was done at the sole discretion of the City Clerk.

The Chair will not go through the process, which would take many months, of asking for permission for these specific delegations. Plans with respect to the content of those delegations will be made in their absence.

Members expressed confusion with this decision and asked the Chair for clarification. The Chair stated that he regretted that he had no further information.

9. Adjournment

(T. Wallis / J. Diemert)

That, there being no further business, the meeting be adjourned at 7:30 PM.

CARRIED