



LGBTQ Advisory Committee

History
Successes
Challenges

Cameron Kroetsch, Chair
Violetta Nikolskaya, Vice Chair

Brief History of the LGBTQAC

- In part, this Committee was borne out of a lawsuit filed against the City for refusing to recognize "Gay Pride Day" in the City of Hamilton in 1992 (which was ultimately resolved between 1995 and 2002)
- It was initially formed in the early-mid 2000s and has been operating for about 16 years as an "Advisory Committee"

Mandate

- The LGBTQ Advisory Committee for the City of Hamilton exists to **eliminate barriers** experienced by LGBTQ communities by **giving voice** to the perspectives of LGBTQ individuals and **evaluating the City** on its related efforts. The Committee does this by **making recommendations to Council and staff** in order that the City of Hamilton will excel in providing services to and interfacing with members of the LGBTQ communities.

Where This Term of Council Started

- May 15, 2019 - Our Committee hadn't met for several months
 - The question was put to us at our first meeting, "What do you plan to do for the flag raising event this year?"
 - Our recommendation, in response, was not received well by City Council; much of the Committee's work was done in this political context

Successes

- Started social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook to communicate about LGBTQAC meetings and events
- Accepted delegations from lawyers working on the Independent Review of the event surrounding Pride 2019 and from a community organization looking to connect with Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities

Successes

- Established 4 Working Groups (2 currently on hiatus) -
 - Needs Assessment (on hiatus)
 - Expanding the Committee's Membership (on hiatus)
 - Reviewing the Committee's Documents
 - Changing the Name of the Committee

Successes

- Held a Community Conversation after the violence at Pride 2019 in Council Chambers that brought together hundreds of member of Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities (moderated by our Chair)
- Held another Community Conversation, virtually, in June 2021 to continue to advance and advocate for issues

Successes

- Completed an overhaul of the template for our minutes, in cooperation and collaboration with the City Clerk and their office, to increase both legibility and ease of use
- Successfully worked with the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee to increase the number of members on the LGBTQAC from 9 to 15

Successes

- Submitted recommendations to various bodies with respect to reconsidering City Council's citizen appointee to the Hamilton Police Services Board; including a delegation to the Board on February 14, 2020
- Held an event at the YWCA in December 2019 to introduce the LGBTQAC to the community and to gather in the spirit of friendship and conversation

Successes

- Recommended that there be an All Advisory Committee event in order to bring groups together to share information and ideas and to talk about their successes and challenges (approved by City Council)
- Successfully delegated to other Committees about the event and worked with staff and Council to streamline our recommendation (approved by City Council)

Successes

- Planned and delivered a community survey through the Engage Hamilton platform to get feedback about the LGBTQAC's plans for Pride 2021 (approved by City Council)
- Advertised fill the vacancies on our Committee; hired a member of the queer community to design the marketing and advertising materials (more diverse)

Successes

- Recommended a donation to Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) events in the City of Hamilton (approved by City Council)
- Recommended support to community organizations helping members of Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities who are struggling during the pandemic (approved by City Council)

Successes

- New Land Acknowledgement developed by a member of our Committee in collaboration with local Indigenous youth
- Committee members participated in a number of very successful delegations to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee including one that streamlined the process for delegating itself

Successes

- Delivered our very first Annual Presentation in December 2020 to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee (they were very appreciative of it)
- Recommended that we report to the Emergency and Community Services Committee (more in line with our mandate) (approved by City Council)

Successes

- Advocated on key intersectional issues including -
 - Sidewalk snow clearing (approved, in part, by City Council)
 - Accessible captioning for all City committee meetings (approved by City Council)

Challenges

- Responsibilities were unclear around who could call meetings / policies
 - The Mayor and City Manager called a meeting of our Committee, unilaterally, on May 28, 2019
 - Policies were often unclear, untested, or added without much notice

Challenges

- Sudden changes in administrative support and a lack of clear guidelines around communication were persistent throughout 2019 and 2020, also including -
 - No committee email
 - No central records storage for minutes, motions, etc.
 - No clear policy regarding media contact

Challenges

- COVID-19, especially that virtual meetings were suspended until August 2020, meaning that the LGBTQAC could not participate in celebrating or supporting Digital Pride 2020
- City Council's complaint against the LGBTQAC Chair for sharing public information that they had posted on their own website, including a lengthy public adjudication of the matter and an investigation by the Integrity Commissioner

Contact

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