



## CITIZEN COMMITTEE REPORT

<b>To:</b>	Emergency and Community Services Committee
<b>From:</b>	LGBTQ Advisory Committee  _____ Cameron Kroetsch, Chair
<b>Date:</b>	December 21, 2021
<b>Re:</b>	All Advisory Committee Events for 2022

### Recommendations

That City Council permit the LGBTQ Advisory Committee to host 2 informal All Advisory Committee events in 2022 and for the Chair of the LGBTQ Advisory Committee, with the support of the Committee's Staff Liaison, to be permitted to communicate informally with the Chairs of the City's Advisory Committees and the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities through either -

- direct communication via email, with the expressed consent of each Chair of the aforementioned committees; or
- if there has not been consent, through the Staff Liaisons for the aforementioned committees.

## **Background**

The LGBTQ Advisory Committee (LGBTQAC) recommended that City Council allow an All Advisory Committee event to take place in 2021. That event took place on September 27, 2021.

It was a successful first event and allowed each Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) to attend, provide brief introductions (5 minutes each), and answer questions from other Advisory Committees.

It was effective as a first step and the facilitation of the meeting by the office of the City Clerk was helpful in getting this off the ground in a coordinated manner.

There has been discussion, informally, and there were comments during the event in September, that indicated that this type of event should both continue and that it should be less formal to allow for more discussion, engagement, and collaboration.

When the LGBTQAC originally proposed this event, it did so in the spirit of holding a cooperative event, hosted by the LGBTQAC, and not a formal meeting run by City staff. While we appreciate the intervention of City staff in asking that City Council alter our original recommendation, we hope that we might be able to continue with further, more informal events, in order to build on the work done at the first event.

Simply put, there were a number of barriers to participation that existed when this event became more formal in nature. Some of those barriers were imposed by the formal rules that govern public meetings, namely the time restrictions for "delegations", but it was also not possible for members of Advisory Committees to communicate with one another freely but only through the delegation process.

As it stated in our original recommendation, "This event is intended to restart the tradition of ACs coming together informally (i.e. not using a formal meeting structure). In the past, it was a regular occurrence for Chairs, Vice Chairs, and other members of ACs to hold informal events to gather, discuss best practices, and offer support to one another."

The formality of the event held in September 2021 did not allow for support among Advisory Committees or for an informal structure, as was mentioned by some who attended the event this year (both during and after the meeting).

## **Analysis / Rationale**

In order for Advisory Committees representing equity-seeking communities to come together and have meaningful conversations, to support one another, and to share their stories, there must be an opportunity for more informality.

This informality exists as part of Advisory Committees, already, in between meetings, when individual Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Recording Secretaries are crafting draft reports, preparing Agendas and Minutes. This is important Advisory Committee work.

While that structural work is important, and is permitted to take place informally (outside of a formal meeting structure), so too is the work of connecting with our peers.

As we have said before, now many times, the work of the LGBTQAC is not done in a silo separate from other Advisory Committees.

The issues facing our collective communities are often similar, overlapping, and connected. We do ourselves and those who we represent in the broader community a disservice if we do not take the necessary time to reflect, debrief, and collaborate more broadly.

Equity is, in many ways, about acknowledging formal structural barriers and finding ways to navigate those barriers, when possible.

For us, this seems like a moment that requires that kind of analysis, a way for Advisory Committees to improve upon practices and make recommendations within a more supportive equity-seeking framework.

If this recommendation is not approved, the LGBTQAC plans to set up a Working Group to facilitate this, to which we will invite members from other Advisory Committees.

We would, however, prefer to have the latitude to organize events and receive some support from City staff in communicating with other Advisory Committees in a way that has fewer barriers.