



CITIZEN COMMITTEE REPORT

To:	Audit, Finance and Administration Committee
From:	Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee <div style="text-align: right; margin-right: 100px;"> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/> Deanna Allain, Chair </div>
Date:	January 26, 2023
Re:	Feedback on the Procedural Handbook for Citizen Appointees to City of Hamilton Local Boards

Recommendation

That the Feedback on the Procedural Handbook for Citizen Appointees to City of Hamilton Local Boards, be received.

Feedback

The Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee recommends that Council, with the support of staff, consider the following items of feedback respecting the Procedural Handbook, and ensure that commitments listed by the city and staff are upheld.

The document's table of contents and references to by-laws and other pieces of legislation should include hyperlinks for ease of access in electronic format. Additionally, the document should be available in a plain language format, recognizing that the format and legalese creates a barrier to engagement and ensuring all committee members understand their roles and commitments.

Should council members or staff require additional information related to any of the mentioned feedback, the committee is prepared to provide additional reports or attend meetings to respond to questions.

The following items of feedback were identified by members of the Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee through working group sessions:

- Page 10: regarding the appointment and recruitment process, there should be a commitment by the City of Hamilton to provide recruitment information to community partners and organizations, with particular focus on encouraging members of marginalized communities to apply, in line with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion in the recruitment process.
- Page 12: regarding member training, it is imperative that the City Clerk ensure existing and new members of the committee receive training, as new members to this committee beginning early 2022 did not receive most of the listed training, or materials related to it. In the sharing of training information and reference documents, it should be readily available and easily accessible for both committee members and the general public to access, including having such information available on the City of Hamilton website along with up-to-date committee information. The City Clerk should have a commitment and procedure to monitor their fulfilment of training and reference documents provided. Committee members feel that training and orientation has been minimal and insufficient, causing confusion and limiting engagement and the development of action items in formal meetings. Providing additional training in procedure, meeting format, and how to prepare documents such as Citizen Committee Reports or Meeting Minutes would be helpful to effective operation and success.
- Page 14: regarding council representatives on advisory committees, there should be a commitment of attendance, or otherwise a process to allow committees to request another council representative if attendance becomes a challenge. The Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee has only had a council representative attend one meeting since the beginning of its current term.
- Page 21: regarding consultation on staff reports, this is a practice that has not taken place during this term of the committee. Staff should be committed to utilizing advisory committees for feedback on reports on a frequent and consistent basis, and members of council should be encouraged to directly request staff consult with advisory committees to ensure this takes place. In the absence of this practice, citizen advisory committees often lack notice and necessary time to review documents and generate reports and feedback before items are reviewed by members of council. Again, there should be a commitment by staff to regularly and consistently consult with advisory committees, and a procedure to ensure the commitment is maintained.
- Page 23: regarding calls to vote, there is no mention of an option to abstain from votes and how they would be recorded. If there is no abstention option for members, it should be clearly stated along with reasoning in this handbook.
- Page 33, regarding public notice of citizen member vacancies, these again should be shared with community organizations with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.