




INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Audit, Finance & Administration Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 7, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Voluntary Advisory Committee Review (CM23025) (City Wide) - REVISED (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Shannon Honsberger (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6542 Policy and Public Affairs Specialist
SUBMITTED BY:	Janette Smith City Manager
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

At the July 13, 2023 meeting of Audit, Finance, & Administration Committee, Committee considered a motion to review Voluntary Advisory Committees. The motion proposed:

- a) That the City of Hamilton pause all Volunteer Advisory Committees, with the exception of the Climate Change Advisory Committee, for which recruitment for the current Council term is underway, and the Hamilton Veterans Committee, so they can continue to plan the 2023 Remembrance Day Service; and
- b) That City Manager's Office and Corporate Services staff be directed to report back to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee with recommendations on the following:
 - i. best practices that prioritizes resident engagement including access to, understanding of and participation in community engagement;
 - ii. review and provide recommendations to Council as informed by existing partnerships with local community-based organizations and networks to

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

- help shape and advise decision-making efforts on City initiatives, programs, services, policies, and by-laws;
- iii. existing community-based engagement methods inclusive of the Volunteer Advisory Committees to fulfil the priorities of Council aligned with the Term of Council priorities 2022 – 2026; and
 - iv. a resource list of local equity-deserving groups doing community and grassroots organizing that can be contacted for engagement and feedback on City Wide processes and policies.

To aid in decision-making, staff were directed to prepare a report for the September 7, 2023 meeting respecting the expected duration of the proposed pause of the Volunteer Advisory Committees, and the expected scope of and deliverables for the proposed review of the Volunteer Advisory Committees. The decision on this motion was deferred until these details were available at the September 7, 2023 meeting.

This information report responds to this direction.

INFORMATION

Should this motion be approved and staff are directed to complete a review of voluntary advisory committees, the recommended scope and deliverables would be as follows:

In scope:

- Conduct a best practice scan of municipal Voluntary Advisory Committees and related alternatives, including a comparative analysis across other jurisdictions
- Consultation with Council members, advisory committee members, and staff liaisons to better understand current challenges and needs
- A review of financial and human resources required in the current advisory committee structure
- Assess current state of meetings including attendance, meeting frequency, turnover, etc.
- Scan of other advisory tables that the City actively consults with for advice and feedback, including community-based task forces, steering committees, and working groups
- Review external community based organizations, and their methodology, that support similar work provided by Voluntary Advisory Committees
- Consider the role of advisory committees within the forthcoming Public Engagement Framework and Policy

Out of scope:

- Broad public engagement is out of scope as this work would be duplicative of the efforts underway in the Government Relations and Community Engagement Division
- Consideration of other forms of public engagement that are part of the forthcoming Public Engagement Framework and Policy are out of scope to eliminate issues of duplication

Deliverables:

- A current state assessment of resource implications, challenges, and opportunities for formal resident advice.
- A summary of the jurisdictional scan, and community assessment
- Options and recommendations for either the improvement or replacement of the current advisory committee structure for Council to consider

It is important to note that some of the work identified, including the best practices review and resource list for equity-deserving groups, overlaps with work underway on the Public Engagement Policy and Framework. Activities associated with the review of the Voluntary Advisory Committees should be scoped more narrowly to avoid duplication.

Timing:

It is expected that this work could be completed, and recommendations brought back to committee by the end of the first quarter of 2024. This would follow the return of the Public Engagement Policy and Framework, slated for the fourth quarter of 2023.

It would be preferable that committees identified in the motion be paused for the duration of the review to release staff liaison time to complete this work, except for the Seniors Advisory Committee. This Committee supports the Seniors Awards and is required to ensure this event runs smoothly. A list of the recommended committees to be paused is included in Appendix A to Report CM23025.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A – CM23025: Listing of Voluntary Advisory Committees to be paused during the Review