

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

General Issues Committee: June 19, 2024

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR C. KROETSCH.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR.....

Representation by the Urban Indigenous Community at City Council

WHEREAS City Council is currently made up of 15 Councillors and 1 Mayor, a total of 16 members;

WHEREAS members of the urban Indigenous community, represented by the Circle of Beads, have asked the City of Hamilton to support their request for the City to ask the Province of Ontario to have changes made to the *Municipal Act* to permit a member of Hamilton’s urban Indigenous community to be a voting member of City Council;

WHEREAS the Circle of Beads has asked, while Council awaits word from the Province about that request, that it establish an interim advisory seat (non voting) on Council for a member of Hamilton’s urban Indigenous community;

WHEREAS there are governance, legal, and other implications to honouring these requests that the municipality must fully explore before Council formally considers them;

WHEREAS First Nations in Canada have specific and distinct relationships with the Federal and Provincial levels of governments through the Indian Act;

WHEREAS according to the National Association of Friendship Centres, as of 2021, approximately 88% of Indigenous people in Ontario live in urban settings, which means that a majority of Indigenous peoples live their lives with no direct local representation with respect to the services they access most;

WHEREAS City Council approved the Urban Indigenous Strategy (UIS) presented to, endorsed, and fully supported by the General Issues Committee on July 8, 2019 and committed to “having a trusting relationship with Indigenous communities where we communicate and work together appropriately to address the unique needs and issues of Indigenous people”;

WHEREAS, within the UIS, there was direct acknowledgement of ongoing and historical oppression including many unique barriers related to health, poverty, justice, employment, and intergenerational trauma;

WHEREAS City Council has made a commitment to supporting Indigenous rights and history;

WHEREAS Land Theme Action 8 in the UIS, a short term goal meant to be achieved by the City in 1-2 years, reads, “Understand how concepts such as the Doctrine of Discovery affect municipal decision making and develop tools to reform those processes”;

WHEREAS the City of Halifax, Nova Scotia, after approving a motion to its Regional Council on October 23, 2023, is currently investigating and considering the development of an Indigenous council seat, specifically a Mi'kmaw seat; and

WHEREAS the Province of Nova Scotia has set a precedent by the addition of a Provincial seat in their legislature for a Mi'kmaw representative since 1992.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That City staff in the Indigenous Relations and Legal Services Divisions report back to a future General Issues Committee on recommendations and information related to the following:

- (a) The City’s statutory responsibilities to Indigenous communities, the responsibilities of the Provincial and Federal governments, and an identification of any limitations in the *Municipal Act* and other legislation including an analysis that addresses the requests made by the Circle of Beads to Council on February 14 and June 19, 2024;
- (b) The outstanding actions in the Urban Indigenous Strategy (UIS) that include an identification of any ongoing work towards closer collaboration and involvement throughout the municipal decision making process as it relates to the urban Indigenous community and other Indigenous leaders and representative organizations; and
- (c) The ongoing work the City is doing with respect to Truth and Reconciliation best practices including a scan of the work being done by other municipalities across Canada and ongoing work through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities with respect to urban Indigenous communities and other Indigenous leaders and representative organizations.