

DATE OF MEETING September 30, 2019

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SUBJECT **NANAIMO YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present for the Governance and Priorities Committee's consideration options and a recommendation regarding the Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council.

Recommendation

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council dissolve the Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council.

BACKGROUND

The Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council (NYAC) was formed in 2014. The mandate of the NYAC is to provide Mayor and Council with a youth perspective on municipal issues. The NYAC was struck to provide input and advice to City staff as requested, and seek to involve and inform the young people of Nanaimo on issues that affect them and the community as a whole.

The City is of the opinion that youth should be encouraged and given the opportunity to make positive contributions to their communities, to take a leading roles in issues which affect their lives and that an investment in young people is an investment in the future.

Currently NYAC is not meeting, pending direction from Council. When the committee was meeting Staff found it challenging to find a consistent meeting date and time that suited all NYAC members due to commitments related to extra curricular activities and schedules.

Furthermore, there is the challenge that the Youth who applied for and who were selected to be on the NYAC appear to be drawn from youth with higher access to resources and support that enable them to both apply for and to participate in such a committee. As such, due to the selection process these youth may not be fully representative of the diversity of youth in our community, particularly youth who face higher levels of vulnerability.

Youth in Nanaimo are currently engaged in a variety of ways, such as:

Direct Programming

- Community Based (babysitter training, badminton, cooking, makeup, rowing, paddle boarding, fencing, science and technology camps, guitar)
- Drop in programs (Spare Blox/Youth Lounge)
- Arena based (RecSkate, RecFigure, hockey fundamentals, adaptive hockey, power skating)

- Aquatic based (Red Cross lessons, Junior Lifeguard Club, bronze cross/medallion, National Lifeguard Service [NLS], Water Safety Instructors [WSI])

Leadership Development Opportunities

- Leaders in Training and Quest programs (about 150 participants per year) with numerous community partners (37 unique agencies in 2015 including Loaves and Fishes, School District 68 [SD 68], Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Vancouver Island, Vancouver Island University [VIU], Child Development Centre)
- Jr. Leaders in Training summer camp
- Babysitter Training

Advocacy

- Youth Advocates committee - called "...the most functional cross-sectoral table in Nanaimo" (monthly, Sept-May). Members from Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD), Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre, Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Tillicum Lelum, Rainbows, Haven, Hospice, Discovery, Edgewood, SD 68, Foodshare, Immigrant Welcome Centre,

Community Development/Outreach

- Upcoming partnerships with SD 68 (diversity dance, learning alternatives)
- "Stop Worrying about Stress and Anxiety" – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) group led by Dr. Poteryko
- Youth Lounge at Nanaimo Aquatic Centre – in partnership with Boys and Girls Club
- Spare Blox – hosted in 2 community schools and Oliver Woods Community Centre
- Social media including Youth Nanaimo Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Youth Resource Guide

Events

- Youth Week (May 1-7)
- Planning to participate in "Youthapalooza" this fall – youth event focusing on mental health

Culture Initiatives

- Youth Poet Laureate
 - High school poetry contest

Engagement Strategy

The 2020 Strategic Plan review will include youth engagement and staff have initiated projects with both VIU Masters in Planning Classes and an individual student to get feedback on how to best to engage youth on major projects. The individual student will review best practices for youth engagement in other municipalities and provide recommendations to support improved youth engagement for future City of Nanaimo projects and events.

Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness

The new Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness allows for youth membership and seeks input from youth on a variety of topics with respect to policies, bylaws, and other initiatives and projects the City of Nanaimo undertakes.

Other Engagement Opportunities

Staff will continue to seek youth engagement opportunities in a way that youth prefer to engage, outside of a committee format, in all of our program and activities. Staff will bring recommendations forward to Council as these opportunities arise.

DISCUSSION

Staff recommend that all committees struck relate to the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. Council has not identified youth issues as a theme in the Strategic Plan, however, Staff encourage the continuation of input from youth in the broader community. Encouraging youth to participate in their community in the avenues noted above fosters a sense of belonging. Staff have drafted terms of reference for Council approval for an accessibility and inclusiveness committee which includes a position for a youth representative.

OPTIONS

- Option 1 – That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to dissolve the Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council.
 - The advantages are: Staff resources will be reallocated to support existing and future committees. Youth will be engaged using other methods.
 - The disadvantages are: Dissolving the NYAC extinguishes the direct link between youth and Council.
 - Financial Implications: Funds set aside for NYAC would be redistributed to other projects.
- Option 2 – That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to resume meetings of the Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council.
 - The advantages are: Council will have a direct link to youth through the youth council.
 - The disadvantages are: Depending on members' availability, a call for new members may be required. Staff resources which could be allocated to future committees will be unavailable.
 - Financial Implications: Funding for the youth council is currently in the budget. No further financial implications are expected.
- Option 3 – That Council provide alternate direction regarding the Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The NYAC is not currently meeting, pending Council's decision regarding the future of the committee.
- Staff recommend that NYAC be dissolved.
- The City engages youth in variety of ways related to direct programming, leadership development opportunities, advocacy, events and community outreach.
- A youth representative position will be included in the terms of reference for the accessibility and inclusiveness committee.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council Terms of Reference

Submitted by:

Sheila Gurrie
Director of Legislative Services

Concurrence by:

Richard Harding
Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture