

DATE OF MEETING December 9, 2019

AUTHORED BY NATALIE SPONAUGLE, LEGISLATIVE SERVICES CLERK

**SUBJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with a draft Terms of Reference for the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness.

### **Recommendation**

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council establish an Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness and provide direction on which draft Terms of Reference they would like to adopt for this Committee.

## **BACKGROUND**

On 2019-JUN-17, Council adopted their 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, which includes a vision for a community that is “livable, environmentally sustainable and full of opportunity for all generations and walks of life.”

This desire to build a community that is accessible and inclusive to all has been echoed in many of the discussions that have taken place around the Council table over the past number of months.

At the Governance and Priorities Committee meeting held 2019-OCT-07, Staff presented a draft Terms of Reference for an Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) for Council’s consideration. After some discussion, the Terms of Reference was referred back to Staff for public consultation and input.

Staff conducted a survey between November 1-17, 2019 to collect feedback on the draft Terms of Reference and received 135 submissions (see Attachment C for survey results). The survey was promoted via the City website, a news release, through social media and distributed via email to the various groups identified on the draft Terms of Reference as seen in Attachment A.

## **DISCUSSION**

The survey responses indicate that 82% are very much in support of this Committee being created with 79% in full support of the committee’s mandate and objectives. In terms of membership, 50% were very much in support of the membership as listed on the draft Terms of Reference (Attachment A) while 31% were only somewhat in agreement.

When asked if there was another organization they felt should be included on the membership list, 17 of the 53 responses to that question indicated that they felt Indigenous representation of some form should be included (Snuneymuxw First Nation, Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre, or First Nations/Aboriginal/Indigenous representation in general). Of all the written answers submitted, this theme was the most predominant.

With this in mind, Staff are presenting for Council's consideration a second version of a draft Terms of Reference (Attachment B). This version sees the number of Council members on the Committee reduced from two (2) to one (1) member and an additional seat added for a member at large representing the Indigenous community.

As mentioned in a previous report dated 2019-SEP-30 (Attachment D), 13 members would typically be a greater number than Staff would recommend to have sit on a committee; however, the Committee membership has been structured in such a way to ensure a balanced cross-section of those representing individuals most affected by matters of accessibility and inclusion. To remove any of the groups identified on the draft Terms of References in an effort to reduce the number of members could result in the loss of representation for a particular demographic.

Staff are presenting two Terms of References for Council's consideration and discussion.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council establish an Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness and adopt the associated Terms of Reference as presented in Attachment A.
  - The advantages of this option: Establishing the ACAI reaffirms Council's commitment to their vision of ensuring that Nanaimo is a livable community for residents of all generations and walks of life. Leaving membership open to include people of all ethnicities does not limit Council's opportunity to support a balanced and diverse membership when reviewing the Committee applications.
  - The disadvantages of this option: Resources (such as staffing) may not be available for other potential committees.
2. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council establish an Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness and adopt the associated Terms of Reference as presented in Attachment B.
  - The advantages of this option: Establishing the ACAI reaffirms Council's commitment to their vision of ensuring that Nanaimo is a livable community for residents of all generations and walks of life. Ensuring that Indigenous representation is included in the membership recognizes the importance of including the Indigenous community and reflects some of the public's feedback received from the survey.
  - The disadvantages of this option: Resources (such as staffing) may not be available for other potential committees. Also, including a member to represent the Indigenous community could, by nature of inclusion, appear to exclude other ethnicities from

having a place on the Committee. Reducing the number of Council members on the Committee also limits opportunities for elected officials to have a seat at the table.

3. That the Governance and Priorities Committee provide Staff with alternate direction for a Terms of Reference.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Council's Strategic Plan includes a vision for a community that is "livable, environmentally sustainable and full of opportunities for all generations and walks of life".
- Staff are proposing that an Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) be struck and a terms of reference outlining their mandate be adopted.
- The ACAI would undertake a number of initiatives such as identifying barriers to inclusion and accessibility and making recommendations for improvements.
- As part of their mandate, the ACAI could play an important role in providing oversight through the strategic policy development process to shed light on areas needing improvement.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

ATTACHMENT A: Terms of Reference for an Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (version 1)

ATTACHMENT B: Terms of Reference for an Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (version 2)

ATTACHMENT C: ACAI Survey Summary

ATTACHMENT D: 2019-SEP-30 Staff Report

#### **Submitted by:**

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#### **Concurrence by:**

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