

DATE OF MEETING September 30, 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 adopt the associated Terms of Reference as presented in the report titled "Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness" dated 2019-SEP-30.

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. With this in mind, Staff have prepared a draft Terms of Reference for an Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) for Council's consideration.

With Council's endorsement of the draft work plan and guiding principles for the 2020 strategic policy development process at their meeting held on 2019-SEP-09, Staff recognize an opportunity to have the ACAI be engaged in this process as part of their mandate. Having this committee in place can help ensure that potential barriers to accessibility and inclusion are identified and recommendations for improvements can be made.

DISCUSSION

The membership outlined in the draft Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness is structured to include two members of Council as well as key representatives from various agencies, groups and public bodies who have a vested interest in building a community that is both accessible and inclusive. It also includes two citizens-at-large who would be chosen based on their experience and involvement related to these matters.

While 13 members is a greater number than Staff would typically recommend to have sit on a committee, the intention with the ACAI is to engage with a cross-section of those representing individuals most affected by matters of accessibility and inclusion. The challenge here was including key stakeholders for this cause while ensuring that meetings will be both effective and productive.

The purpose of this committee is to promote social and political equity. The committee's mandate includes identifying barriers to accessibility and inclusion; making recommendations for improvements; participating in reviewing draft plans, policies and procedures; and assisting in developing a strategy for increased engagement and public awareness. The ACAI is structured to provide opportunities to assist Council in ensuring that our City is, in fact, a livable community for all.

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 the report titled "Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness" dated 2019-SEP-30.
 - 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. It also reinforces their key strategic themes of Livability and Governance Excellence.
 - 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 direct staff to amend the draft Terms of Reference based on Council's vision for the Committee.
 - The advantages of this option: If the draft Terms of Reference does not capture Council's vision for the ACAI, this provides Council the opportunity to have the Terms of Reference amended to reflect Council's will.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Resources (such as staffing) may not be available for other potential committees.
3. That the Governance and Priorities Committee provide Staff with alternate direction. |
 - The advantages of this option: The GPC could recommend an alternate direction be taken to address issues related to accessibility and inclusion in our community.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Not establishing a formal Committee dedicated to accessibility and inclusion could hinder opportunities for increased awareness and action on matters related to this.

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 |

Submitted by:

Sheila Gurrie
Director, Legislative Services |

Concurrence by:

Jake Rudolph
Chief Administrative Officer |