

DATE OF MEETING MAY 4, 2020

AUTHORED BY NATALIE SPONAUGLE, LEGISLATIVE SERVICES CLERK

SUBJECT COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE MEETINGS DURING COVID-19

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide information and seek clarification from Council on proceeding with committee and task force meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. |

### **Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Direct Staff to reinstate Board of Variance, Design Advisory Panel;
2. Direct Staff to reinstate Finance and Audit Committee meetings starting June 2020;
3. Allow for Governance and Priorities Committee meetings to be scheduled as Special Council meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic; and
4. Discontinue and suspend indefinitely, the Council Remuneration Task Force initiative.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the March 16, 2020 Regular Council meeting, Council made a motion to postpone all task force and committee meetings, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Province announced Ministerial Order No. M083 on March 26, 2020, allowing for a number of changes to Council meeting processes during the pandemic. Since the Order was announced, Staff have implemented changes including the use of electronic conferencing software, via Zoom, enabling Special Council meetings to take place in a virtual environment. A motion was made at the Special Council meeting held on April 1, 2020 to exempt the Health and Housing Task Force from the suspension of committees. This enabled the Task Force to provide additional support and guidance in planning for vulnerable populations during the pandemic. The Health and Housing Task Force meetings that have taken place since this motion was made have also been conducted electronically, via Zoom, and the meetings have been live streamed and recorded for public viewing.

At the Special Council meeting held on April 20, 2020 a motion was made for all existing committees and task forces to be reinstated.

## **DISCUSSION**

While the COVID-19 pandemic and Provincial Health orders and guidelines are still in effect, staff are seeking to clarify some of the logistics involved with reinstating committees and task forces. The following is a list of committees and task forces which were underway prior to COVID-19:

- Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness
- Board of Variance
- Design Advisory Panel
- Economic Development Task Force
- Environment Committee
- Finance and Audit Committee
- Governance and Priorities Committee
- Health and Housing Task Force

Staff understand that Council would like to see the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness, Economic Development Task Force, Environment Committee and Governance and Priorities Committee meetings resume. Further direction is needed to confirm whether the Board of Variance, Design Advisory Panel and Finance and Audit Committee meetings should also be reinstated, as they were not specifically mentioned during the discussion which took place at the April 20, 2020 meeting.

Furthermore, in an effort to move the topics forward that Council had previously identified as being a priority for Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meetings, Staff are recommending that GPC meetings be scheduled as Special Council meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will still allow for thorough discussion on those topics but also permit Council to vote on and move forward items of importance in a more timely manner, if they so choose.

The Council Remuneration Task Force, is an initiative which warrants reconsideration given the economic uncertainty and other Council priorities. It is therefore recommended that the Council Remuneration Task force not be established. The concept of the Task Force has validity from a governance point of view, however, the timing is challenging and quite possibly the mandate may no longer have validity.

While COVID-19 is still an active risk and physical distancing measures are in place, all committee and task force meetings will be conducted virtually, via Zoom. Quorum will still need to be present for the meeting to take place. As the public are not able to attend meetings in person at this time, these meetings will be audio and video recorded for viewing on the City website after the meeting.

The following recommendation is to help provide Staff with clear direction on committees and task forces moving forward.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That Council:
  1. Direct Staff to reinstate Board of Variance, Design Advisory Panel;
  2. Direct Staff to reinstate Finance and Audit Committee meetings starting June 2020;
  3. Allow for Governance and Priorities Committee meetings to be scheduled as Special Council meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic; and,
  4. Discontinue and suspend indefinitely, the Council Remuneration Task Force.
  - The advantages of this option: Providing Staff with clear direction on how Council would like to proceed with the reinstatement of committees and task forces will help ensure that the will of Council is being upheld
  - The disadvantages of this option: Reinstating all committee and task force meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic poses some challenges due to the need for all of these meetings to be held virtually at this time.
  - Financial Implications: Some extra Staff time required for the added technology set-up.
2. That Council provide Staff with alternate direction. |

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- At the April 20, 2020 Special Council meeting, Council made a motion to reinstate all existing committees and task forces
- Staff are seeking to clarify whether any committees and task forces should remain on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Ministerial Order No. allows for a number of changes to Council and committee meeting processes during the pandemic, including the use of virtual meetings which the City has implemented
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the public will not be able to attend committee and task force meetings in person; however, these meetings will be audio and video recorded for viewing on the City website after the meeting

#### **Submitted by:**

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#### **Concurrence by:**

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