

DATE OF MEETING FEBRUARY 13, 2023

AUTHORED BY NATALIE SPONAUGLE, COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR

SUBJECT GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide an overview of the current Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) structure, and to present options for discussion and feedback that will guide future amendments to the GPC's Terms of Reference.

BACKGROUND

The Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) was established, and its Terms of Reference adopted, at the March 4, 2019 Regular Council meeting (Attachment A). GPC meetings were established with the intention of being working sessions that would allow Council to delve into one or two matters of interest and importance for the City in a less formal and more involved manner. Prior to the pandemic, the meetings were held in the boardroom of the Service and Resource Centre at 411 Dunsmuir Street. After a six-month hiatus, when restrictions were put into place and virtual/hybrid meetings were established, GPC meetings began taking place in the Vancouver Island Conference Centre's Shaw Auditorium.

GPC meetings provide an opportunity for in-depth conversations on specific topics identified as priorities by Council. They also act as a venue for staff to bring forward projects and initiatives for discussion prior to being brought before Council. In addition, the GPC acted as the steering committee for the ReImagine Nanaimo process, prior to *City Plan's* adoption in July 2022. |

DISCUSSION

With a new Council established, there is an opportunity to review the format and mandate of GPC meetings moving forward. Staff invite Council to provide their feedback, which will be facilitated through Zoom polls during the February 13, 2023 GPC meeting, on logistics such as meeting location, time of day and frequency.

Staff also welcome feedback on a proposed approach which would serve to bolster engagement between the community and Council on topics brought forward to the GPC. Staff are proposing that:

- GPC agenda topics be focused on the Strategic Priorities identified by Council through their planning sessions (beginning in late February 2023).
- A published schedule of upcoming GPC topics be posted to the City website, with topics bookmarked 6 months in advance.
- Community engagement take place, using the Get Involved Nanaimo platform and a variety of other media, on the identified topics prior to them coming to a GPC meeting.

- The engagement results be presented to Council as part of their agenda package on that topic, so they can consider the feedback during their discussions.
- Those wishing to appear as delegations would still be welcome and, when appropriate, Council or staff may wish to invite individuals, groups or organizations to present on the chosen topic.

This proposed approach recognizes Council's desire to increase engagement between Council and residents, and aligns with recommendations made by the Community Engagement Task Force (CETF) in 2019 (Attachment B). Those recommendations include:

- Be committed to working more closely with the community to improve engagement and participation in Council decisions so that residents feel empowered to be more active in shaping their community and future.
- Begin with something as simple as a published calendar of what Council intends to engage residents about over the next year.
- Ensure that existing methods for community engagement are fully understood and utilized.
- Consider how to improve community engagement through advertising, social media and online technology.

CONCLUSION

In the months ahead, Council will be setting their Strategic Priorities for the next four years. This is a great opportunity to revisit the GPC's Terms of Reference and format to ensure that they reflect the will of Council. Staff look forward to receiving feedback on logistics and the proposed engagement strategy prior to returning to Council at a later date with an updated Terms of Reference for endorsement.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Council will discuss the format and mandate of the Governance and Priorities Committee at their Feb. 13, 2023 GPC meeting.
- A strategy is being proposed that would see a schedule of GPC topics published in advance, with supporting engagement opportunities.
- Staff will return to a future Council meeting with a revised Terms of Reference for adoption, based on Council's feedback.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Current Terms of Reference for the Governance and Priorities Committee (adopted March 4, 2019)

ATTACHMENT B: Community Engagement Task Force final report

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