

DATE OF MEETING FEBRUARY 13, 2023

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SUBJECT Other Committees, Task Forces and Next Steps

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with information regarding other Council committees and task forces and receive feedback from Council in order to bring options for Council's consideration to a future meeting.

BACKGROUND

The *Community Charter* outlines the parameters in which the Mayor and/or Council can strike a committee. A Standing committee as outlined in section 141 of the *Community Charter* is established by the Mayor and must have a majority of its members as Council members. A Select committee (section 142) is established by Council and at least one member of the committee must be a Council member.

Currently, the City of Nanaimo has two Committee of the Whole/Standing Committees (Governance and Priorities Committee and the Finance and Audit Committee), and two Select Committees (Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness and the Environment Committee).

Other committees or task forces that are established by Council, would be considered either a standing or select committee, as outlined above.

DISCUSSION

Finance and Audit Committee:

The Finance and Audit Committee, which was established in 2016 by Council, could be considered a true demonstration of a successful committee as its purpose outlined in the Terms of Reference (to review budget and financial considerations prior to Council approval) has allowed for in-depth discussion and review of all financial decisions prior to proceeding to a Council meeting. The meetings are structured well, the purpose of meetings is clearly defined and the agenda items are consistent with that purpose. Council has indicated a desire to keep this Committee working and successful.

Governance and Priorities Committee:

[Separate Report provided for discussion.]

Environment Committee:

The Environment Committee is a Select Committee that was struck by the previous Council and its members had their last meeting prior to the General Election in 2022. Notice and request for new membership would be required, as well as the appointment of two members of Council (Chair/Co-Chair), prior to re-initiating this committee. The Committee's last meeting allowed for feedback from members on how the committee functioned (what worked/what didn't work) and the overall success of the committee was discussed.

The Environment Committee played a critical role during the Reimagine Nanaimo process and their feedback/input was incorporated into *City Plan*. The Committee allowed for a great forum to bring technical environmental considerations and initiatives to the table and for staff and members of Council to receive their input.

As Council will soon be considering their term's Strategic Priorities; reviewing the feedback provided by members of the Environment Committee as well as considering alignment with Council's Strategic Plan and *City Plan* may provide Council with the opportunity to alter the Terms of Reference. There may also be a desire to dissolve the Committee and strike another after the Strategic Priorities sessions have occurred.

Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness

[Separate Report provided for discussion.]

Quarterly Town Hall/e-Town Halls

At the December 12, 2022 Governance and Priorities Committee meeting there was discussion about the possibility of having quarterly town hall type meetings that could be in place of a Safety Committee and/or another format of engagement with the public. Currently, Council holds an annual e-Town Hall for budget (usually held in December of each year), and one option could be having both a Spring and Fall session for budget to add further opportunity for public feedback.

Other sessions could be held in different facilities – though considerations for recording or livestreaming these meetings would have to be investigated. There could be different topics planned ahead of time and a format to suit the topic could then be determined. This would align with the Community Engagement Task Force recommendations that state:

- 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.

An example is the “World Café” engagement that was done through the Community Engagement Task Force sessions and is planned to be held again this Spring for the Neighbourhood Associations and Council.

The e-Town Hall is another example of format allows for multiple channels of engagement (Twitter, Facebook, website, email and telephone); though, it has only been utilized for budget matters. Opening up this format for other topics could assist in not only engagement but dealing with emerging issues that wouldn't fit the Committee/Task Force format.

Other Committees or Task Forces:

Other Committees:

Other committees that Council may wish to consider that align with your Strategic Priorities and would help to propel the work you wish to complete during your term, would be brought back for decision and consideration after your Strategic Priorities sessions. This will allow for the alignment and focus of any committee or task force with your priorities and align with *City Plan*.

Any Committee or Task force Council considers should contemplate the following in order to fulfil Council's good governance objectives:

- A clear purpose that describes what the Committee/Task Force is intended for is critical.
- A clear mandate – what is the Committee/Task Force meant to achieve?
- Is a Committee or Task Force necessary or can the goal be achieved in another format (GPC, other existing Committee, etc.)?
- Capacity – does staff have existing resources to support additional Committees/Task Forces? This is not just support staff (Recording Secretary) but staff liaisons. Do other projects need to be put on hold for staff to support this work?
- Term of Committee/Task Force and membership. How long the Committee or Task Force continues (Council term for example) and who makes up the membership are important considerations. Committee positions are voluntary and often hard to fill. As well, community members that traditionally apply may not fit the diversity Council is seeking to fulfil the work required.

Mayor's Leaders' Table:

[Separate Report provided.]

CONCLUSION

Council's term is a four-year period that allows for Council to endeavour to achieve the priorities they set early in their term. Committees and Task Forces are one of the tools that can be used to accomplish this. Currently, Council has two Standing Committees consisting of Council as a whole and two Select Committees that can be utilized for much of this. Council should consider what other Committees or Task Forces may be necessary to help facilitate their work; or, other additional opportunities for engagement with citizens that may provide input into their decision-making.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The *Community Charter* outlines the parameters in which the Mayor and/or Council can strike a committee.
- Currently, the City of Nanaimo has two Committee of the Whole/Standing Committees (Governance and Priorities Committee and the Finance and Audit Committee), and two Select Committees (Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness and the Environment Committee).
- Other Committees that Council may wish to consider that align with their Strategic Priorities and would help to propel the work you wish to complete during your term, would be brought back for decision and consideration after your Strategic Priorities sessions. This will allow for the alignment and focus of any Committee or task force with your priorities and align with the City Plan.

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