



Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

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REPORT #: CAO-24-044 **COMMITTEE DATE:** 2024-10-22
REPORT TO: COTW-General **DUE IN COUNCIL:** 2024-10-29
SUBJECT: Draft Advisory Committees of Council Policy

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that:

- 1.1 Council receive the draft Advisory Committees of Council Policy (“Policy”) as provided in **Appendix I** to this report;
- 1.2 Staff be directed to circulate the proposed Policy to all Advisory Committees and to consult with these Committees for feedback prior to the end of the year, and;
- 1.3 Staff bring back a finalized Policy early in the new year for Council consideration.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With a Strategic Plan in place and Council midway through its term, it is appropriate to review the current Committee structure and operating procedures to ensure they continue to serve the needs of Council.

Council policy and procedure on the establishment, administration, and review of Advisory Committees and the Code of Conduct for volunteers who sit on those committees are currently disaggregated among various by-laws, reports, and practices. The proposed Policy codifies guidance related to Advisory Committees in one place.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to introduce a proposed Advisory Committees of Council Policy for consultation.

4. BACKGROUND

- During the last term of Council, there were approximately 25 Committees of Council.
- At the beginning of this Council term, a phased approach was recommended to continue and/or establish new Committees of Council to ensure proper alignment with Council’s Strategic Plan and adequate resourcing. A number of Committees and their membership from the previous term of Council were extended. There are currently 11 Advisory Committees of Council (See Appendix 2).
- With a Strategic Plan in place and Council midway through its term, it is appropriate to review the current Committee structure and operating procedures to ensure they continue to serve the needs of Council and that the appropriate staffing resources are

allocated.

- Advisory Committees provide Council with an additional means to receive views and advice from residents on a variety of matters that contribute to the development of policies, programs and initiatives that enhance the quality of life experience in Niagara-on-the-Lake.
- With the exception of the Committee of Adjustment, Advisory Committees are not delegated decision-makers nor have the authority to direct staff. The nature of Advisory Committee recommendations to Council is purely advisory, not advocacy.
 - The Committee of Adjustment is a quasi-judicial committee that is granted the authority by Council to make decisions on minor variance, consent (severance), fence variance and sign variance applications. This Committee also acts as the property standards appeal board.
- Unless legislation provides otherwise, in its sole discretion, Council may create and sunset Advisory Committees. Council appointed community members serve on these committees at the pleasure of Council.
- Council policy and procedure on the establishment, administration, and review of Advisory Committees and the Code of Conduct for volunteers on those committees is currently disaggregated among various by-laws, reports, and common practice.
- The proposed Policy codifies guidance related to Advisory Committees in one comprehensive document.
- Subject to Council direction to advance this initiative, Staff will consult with current Advisory Committees for their advice and comments on the proposed Policy before it is brought back to Council for consideration and approval early in the new year.

5. DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

It is the legislative mandate of Council to make the final decision on matters that affect the Town. The role of an Advisory Committee is to provide advice and information through recommendations to Council on those matters which relate to their specific mandate. Advisory Committees provide a means to facilitate public input to Council on programs and ideas, and to assist in enhancing the quality of life of the community.

These Committees, both statutory and non-statutory, allow residents from various backgrounds to participate in local government. The Town benefits from community volunteer experience, enthusiasm and civic pride.

The proposed Advisory Committees of Council Policy provides a uniform, principle-based approach to the establishment and operation of Advisory Committees. The Policy applies to all Council-approved Advisory Committees and is intended to address:

- The process for establishing and reviewing Advisory Committees;
- Advisory Committee recruitment, selection, appointment, removal and resignation processes;
- Member and staff duties and conduct;
- Requirements under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and other appropriate legislation as required;
- Operating procedures;
- Rules of Debate;

- Reporting requirements;
- Media Relations; and
- Member Code of Conduct.

The Policy does not apply to the appointment of Council Members to Advisory Committees as this is governed by a separate process.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN

The content of this report supports the following Strategic Plan initiatives:

Pillar

4. Optimize Organizational Excellence

Priority

4.1 Streamline & Modernize

Action

2.1 c) Efficiencies & Cost Reductions/Avoidances

Pillar

2. Good Governance

Priority

4.3 Culture & Workforce

Action

4.3 a) Culture and Workforce

7. OPTIONS

- 7.1 Option 1: That Staff be directed to amend the provisions of the draft Policy prior to the Policy being circulated to Advisory Committees for comment (**Recommended**)
- 7.2 Option 2: That Staff not proceed with consultation on the draft Policy (*Not Recommended*)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this Policy. There are costs associated with striking an advisory committee including advertising for member recruitment and ongoing staff support and administration of the committee. These costs would be considered and approved by Council in separate reports.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental impacts.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

Subject to the endorsement of the contents of this report, Staff will circulate the draft Policy to Advisory Committees and work with the Chairs of those Committees to facilitate the collection

of feedback. Should Council approve the final Policy in the new year, Staff will create educational materials for current and prospective Advisory Committee volunteers. The Policy would also be publicly posted on the Town's website.

11. CONCLUSION

Council policy and procedure on the establishment, administration, and review of Advisory Committees and the Code of Conduct for volunteers on those committees is disaggregated among various by-laws, reports, and common practice. The proposed Policy codifies guidance related to Advisory Committees in one comprehensive document. The Policy, as drafted, will provide a process improvement through clear, consistent, and transparent terms for all Advisory Committees of Council.

12. PREVIOUS REPORTS

- CS-22-036 – 2022-2026 Council Committees and Boards

13. APPENDICES

- Appendix I – Advisory Committees of Council Policy
- Appendix II – 2022-2026 Advisory and Quasi-Judicial Committees of Council
- Appendix III – 2022-2026 Council Committees
- Appendix IV – 2022-2026 Local Boards and Commissions
- Appendix V – 2022-2026 Council Representation on External Boards

Respectfully submitted:

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