
Subject: Establishment of Women's Advisory Committee

Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Report date: Wednesday, November 6, 2019

Recommendations

1. That the terms of reference for the Women's Advisory Committee attached as Appendix 1 to Report CLK 15-2019, **BE APPROVED**;
2. That up to three (3) Regional Councillors **BE APPOINTED** to the Women's Advisory Committee; and
3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to advertise for interested citizens to serve on the Women's Advisory Committee.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is seek approval for a terms of reference for a Women's Advisory Committee.
- At its meeting held on September 19, 2019, Regional Council endorsed the establishment of a Women's Advisory Committee.
- Staff committed to bringing a report forward respecting a terms of reference for the Women's Advisory Committee including membership requirements.

Financial Considerations

The financial implications relating to the establishment of a Women's Advisory Committee include the use of administrative resources and staff to facilitate the meetings.

Analysis

At its meeting held on September 19, 2019, Regional Council approved a motion to endorse the establishment of a Women's Advisory Committee to:

- a. advocate for gender-based issue resolutions and opportunities related to Regional policies, priorities and decisions;
- b. promote leadership development that empowers women in Niagara to fully participate in civic life;

- c. research and provide information and resources about women's gender-based issues to Niagara

Staff researched Women's Committees that have been established in Hamilton, Edmonton and Vancouver to develop a Terms of Reference for the Committee and to consider appropriate membership criteria and Committee size.

Staff are recommending a Committee of 12 members, with up to three (3) of those members being Regional Councillors. This number should provide a cross-section of membership and yet not be too cumbersome.

The membership should come from diverse backgrounds to ensure that the composition of the Committee reflects communities of interest within Niagara that may possess differing perspectives and experience in relation to gender issues and will meet some or all of the following criteria:

- Connection to stakeholder and related communities of interest
- Governance, communication and negotiation skills experience
- Leadership, advocacy and community organization skills and experience
- Commitment to mentoring and empowering
- Business, education and/or social sectors

The Committee will report to Regional Council through the Corporate Services Committee. Human Resources is recommended as the designated lead department providing resource support for the WAC; however, the Committee also has access to the technical expertise of staff from other Regional departments as may be required.

Alternatives Reviewed

There were no alternatives reviewed as the direction to establish this Committee was provided by Regional Council.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The establishment of a Women's Advisory Committee will support Council's strategic priority of sustainable and engaging government by ensuring communications and collaboration with the community.

Other Pertinent Reports

None.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Women's Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

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WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WAC)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Appendix to Report CLK 15-2019

Recommended for Approval by the <name of standing committee> on <date>

Ratified by Regional Council on <date>

Consolidated Version as of <date>

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1. PREAMBLE

The Women's Advisory Committee was established by Regional Council to consider ways to address the underrepresentation of women in public office, on corporate boards and in leadership positions, and the unique economic, social and cultural experiences of women that are directly impacted by public policy decisions.

2. MANDATE

The mandate of the Committee is to make recommendations with a gender lens to policy development and implementation using evidence based decision making in relation to Council policies, priorities and decisions.

3. GOALS/PURPOSE

The goals of the Committee are to:

- advocate for gender-based issue resolutions and opportunities related to Regional policies, priorities and decisions;
- promote leadership development that empowers women in Niagara to fully participate in civic life;
- research and provide information and resources about women's gender-based issues to Niagara

4. REPORTING STRUCTURE

The WAC will report to Regional Council through the Corporate Services Committee.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Composition

Membership for the WAC shall not exceed a maximum of 12 members.

Membership for the WAC shall include:

- Up to three (3) Regional Councillors
- Up to nine (9) citizen members

Individuals recommended for appointment to the Committee will come from diverse backgrounds to ensure that the composition of the Committee reflects communities of interest within Niagara that may possess differing perspectives and experience in relation to gender issues and will meet some or all of the following criteria:

- Connection to stakeholder and related communities of interest
- Governance, communication and negotiation skills experience
- Leadership, advocacy and community organization skills and experience
- Commitment to mentoring and empowering
- Business, education and/or social sectors

All attempts will be made to stay within the guideline composition; however, if the applications received or the qualifications of applicants do not fully address the guideline composition criteria, the most capable and qualified applicants will be recommended for appointment to fulfill the membership composition.

5.2 Term

The term of membership shall be four years, concurrent with Regional Council's elected term of office, and the membership shall be approved by Council in accordance with membership requirements in the Terms of Reference.

5.3 Privacy

The meetings of the WAC are public. Members should be aware that their names will be in the public realm and a list of membership may be provided when requested. Member information, other than name or municipality, will be kept confidential in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

6. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Chair & Vice Chair

A Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from Committee members on a biannual basis at the first meeting of the new year to preside over meetings and Committee business. The Chair of the Committee shall be a Regional Councillor. The Vice Chair of the Committee shall be a public member.

It is the role of the Chair to preside over Committee meetings so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively, and to act as a liaison between the Committee and Regional Council.

It is the role of the Vice Chair to preside over Committee meetings in the absence of the Chair and to perform any other duties delegated by the Chair or as assigned by the Committee through a majority vote.

6.2 Committee Members

All WAC members, including the Chair and Vice Chair, have the responsibility to help achieve the WAC's Mandate and Goals/Purposes. Committee members are also responsible for:

- Reviewing meeting materials in advance of the meetings and arriving prepared to provide a broad perspective on the issues under consideration;
- Working diligently to complete assigned activities;
- Participating on working groups, as appropriate;
- Agreeing to describe, process and resolve issues in a professional and respectful manner;
- Providing input to help identify future projects or strategic priorities for future years' work;
- Communicating activities of the Committee to groups represented or those who may have an interest and offer information back to the Committee.

7. WORKING GROUPS

To fulfill its mandate and accomplish its goals, the WAC may establish working groups to deal with specific issues or projects. The working groups will meet, as needed, to review specific issues referred to them by the WAC and otherwise complete their assigned tasks.

Working groups are considered to be time-limited, project specific sub-committees of the WAC in that they are convened to accomplish a specific task (or tasks) in a narrowly defined time period.

Working groups must be comprised of at least three (3) members of the WAC and may include community members and other individuals with relevant knowledge and expertise. Local municipal participation should be sought depending on the nature of the work being undertaken.

Working groups shall be chaired where possible by a voting member of the WAC and shall provide regular updates to the WAC regarding recommendations on assigned projects. Minutes of the meetings of the working group shall be recorded and submitted to the WAC for proper directing through the approval process. Working groups may meet at a time and place as decided by the members of the working group.

Administrative support shall be provided by a staff representative of the WAC or designate.

8. RESOURCES

Human Resources is the designated lead department providing resource support for the WAC; however, the Committee also has access to the technical expertise of staff from other Regional departments as may be required. It is recognized that staff time and the level of participation will be dependent on other departmental priorities as determined by senior management and/or Regional Council. As required, additional resources may be sought. Additional resourcing may be required for projects with senior levels of government.

The Committee shall receive administrative support from the Office of the Regional Clerk for meeting and agenda management.

9. MEETINGS

A meeting schedule following a quarterly cycle shall be set for the WAC. The schedule will be circulated to the members for approval each year. Should a time sensitive matter arise, the WAC may meet at the call of the Chair.

The WAC meetings will be held at Regional Headquarters at a time as determined by the members. All meetings will be open to the public.

Meetings shall be governed by the Region's Procedural By-law, being a by-law to govern the calling, place and proceedings of the meetings of Council and its Committees, as may be amended from time-to-time.

If necessary, a schedule setting the due dates for materials to be included on the agenda will be circulated to each member pending adoption of a meeting schedule or the scheduling of a meeting date.

A committee member who is unable to attend a meeting, shall forward his/her regrets to the Office of the Regional Clerk as soon as possible. Should the Office of the Regional Clerk not have confirmation of quorum 24 hours prior to the meeting, the meeting shall be cancelled.

10. ABSENTEEISM

Members who miss three unauthorized consecutive meetings shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and will be notified of this in writing by the Committee Chair.

11. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed and refined at a minimum of every four years to ensure that they remain current and meaningful.

Proposals to amend the Terms of Reference shall require the approval of a majority of the members present. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Regional Council for approval.