

Accessibility Working Group Minutes

Monday, June 12, 2017

Present: Linda Bartram (Chair), Robin Bayley *(via Skype)*, Susan Gallagher, Paul Jones, Steve Bertrand, Chris Dobbie

Councillor: Councillor Thornton-Joe, Councillor Jeremy Loveday

Regrets: Chris Marks

Staff: Chris Coates, Brad Dellebuur

DECISIONS

1. Motion to accept the agenda of June 12, 2017:

“Additional Information Regarding Mobility Scooter Use” - added to agenda.

2. May 1, 2017 minutes:

AWG recommended deferring the acceptance of the May 1, 2017 minutes until corrections and more detail was included. Suggested edits of the minutes are to be forwarded to Linda.

Motion: Paul Seconded: Chris CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING DISCUSSION/ACTION:

a. Presentation – Chris Coates, City Clerk

C. Coates provided a background presentation of policy direction, committees and advisory committees, consistent approach for all groups:

- Committee role is to give policy advice to Council
- Currently, committee work does not necessarily connect directly to the Strategic Plan
- It’s important to ensure committees have a clear mandate, clarity on what to work on
- It’s also important to confirm staff support is at the appropriate level
- Reporting out process requires clarification
- Annual work plan development:
 - To focus the work of the committee
 - AWG work is already tied to the 2018 Financial Plan
- Committees do work, forward advice to Council, putting their own lens on issues
 - Council may or may not move forward with the issue

- Policy discussion on Committees is currently scheduled to go forward to Council in July. Hopefully, this report will provide clarity to committee members, staff and Council, and help guide input for the 2018 budget

Councillor Loveday:

- Direction from Council/AWG was to move forward in 2017, not 2018
- Staff decision was not to include in quarterly review

AWG Questions/Comments:

- Regarding AWG action minutes:
 - Legislative and Regulatory Services staff will review current format, and provide advice.
 - Committee recommendations should include rationale, bullet form is fine
 - Action items and information items often require additional information/explanation.
- Do the original Terms of Reference still apply?
 - Pending the development of an interim mandate, the existing mandate still applies
 - Is it reasonable to develop interim Terms of Reference until the Accessibility Framework is adopted?
 - Framework will discuss governance, the role of the AWG in the future
 - Will AWG be involved in this discussion, and if so, to what extent?
 - AWG has struck a sub-committee to work on the interim Terms of Reference, which could provide substantive input on the role of the AWG
 - Staff would appreciate receiving this input
 - Creating an interim Terms of Reference prior to adding new members seems backwards
 - The current role of the Committee is to focus on policy
 - AWG members feel they are short on personpower, need more people to help with the workload
 - If AWG has fulfilled its original mandate, how is the current work fitting in, when will it get done?
 - Staff advised the original mandate has been fulfilled and the mandate of the AWG has contributed valuable work
 - Staff just need to catch up, to help committee get clarity
 - AWG needs to be more selective on what projects they take on
 - Clerk's role is to determine how work is done, AWG's role is to determine what work needs to be done

ACTION: Power Point presentation be included in these minutes.

b. Definitions (Approved by AWG by email).

ACTION: Linda to send final definitions to staff

ACTION: These will be posted on the City's website by Christine.

c. Issues List Priorities – items were prioritized by AWG using the scale identified in the May minutes:

1. Urgent safety and health issues
2. Time Sensitive opportunities
3. Non-urgent accessibility
4. Other

ACTION: The table will be updated and distributed with the June minutes by Christine.

d. Interim Terms of Reference:

ACTION: The sub-committee will meet and send ideas to all AWG members for comment prior to the July meeting.

e. In-Camera Debrief – deferred

Date of next meeting: July 17, 2017

Adjournment: 5:40 p.m.

Attachment – Chris Coates presentation

Overarching Committee Policy

Background

- January 2017 Council direction given to staff to bring forward an overarching Policy to address Committees and Advisory Boards to Council.
- This will cover all groups who directly report to Council including the various planning oriented Committees all of whom are not delegated decision making authority but make recommendations to Council.
- Terms of References for the various Advisory Bodies are not consistent, nor is there a clear operational mandate in many cases.
- These bodies are policy oriented groups
- There are no direct connections with the Council's strategic plan

Purpose

- a clear mandate
- a clear and focused operational approach
- a connection with Council's Strategic Plan
- appropriate staff support
- a clear reporting process to have the recommendations come forward to Council for consideration.

Recommended Approach

- Tighter link of Advisory Bodies focus to Council's Strategic Plan
- Begin with developing an Annual Work Plan to address the focus for the year.
- Identify resourcing requirements for required staff support to the annual work plan of the Committee.
- Recognize that Committee members are policy oriented.
- That Committees are established by Council and make recommendations only.

Next Steps

- Bring Forward the Draft Policy for Council's consideration.
- This is now being written with a summer 2017 timeline.

Questions

Committee members

Questions

1. The Action Minutes format which the AWG has been asked to adopt does not appear to include valuable discussion which is needed to better understand the issues being raised. Accessibility is not well understood and such discussions/explanations are essential for staff and public awareness. How does the Clerk suggest the AWG share this vital information if not through the minutes?

Each recommendation can provide key rationale to support the recommendation

Committee members Questions

2.As the AWG's original mandate was for a limited period of time (Fall 2016) and we do not yet have a new Terms of Reference, does the original TOR still apply?

In short yes they do and Council has given direction to prepare new terms of reference for AWG, We are anticipating bringing forward new Terms of Reference to address the period between now and when the Framework is done, anticipating that the Framework will have a governance component as well that may precipitate a further revision to the TOR.

Committee members

Questions

3. Is the advisory committee review considering technological advancements and accessibility in revising the working rules for committees? For example, is it considering remote participation, assistive technologies and sign language interpretation or transcription? Is it considering modifying procedures such as show of hands or yeas and nays to allow for a more inclusive procedures for people with disabilities who cannot hear or see? Might it consider restricting presence of animals to bona fide assistance animals?

Some of these are broader issues that the City has not caught up with yet and may be appropriate to include as items for the AWG's work plan. The Advisory committee review itself isn't intended to go into that level of detail.

Voting methods and electronic participation can be accommodated and are to some extent now. The voting methodology can certainly be verbal or by hand at the pleasure of the Committee to recognize capabilities.

Committee members Questions

3. (continued)

The presence of Animals in City Hall is not currently within Council's Strategic Plan however under the likely broader guise of recommendations the Committee would likely include in the work plan, if this was developed as a priority by the Committee this could come forward in the work plan for Council to consider when they review it.

Committee members Questions

4. Are you more concerned with reporting structures and the issues listed in your briefing note to counsel of January 2017, than the substance of terms of reference?

In view of the approach being taken with the Policy being prepared, the actual work of the advisory bodies and clarity around that is the primary objective. To keep the information flow organized and rationalized, the reporting structure is an important element but not the primary focus.

Committee members Questions

5. Other city of Victoria advisory committees are working towards implementation or administration of an existing master plan or strategy document. No such master plan exists for accessibility. How do you see amending the terms of reference to address this fundamental deficiency? The AWG requested resources from counsel to develop an accessibility framework which would serve as this master plan. Staff did not recommend this to council and it is now looking as if resources to do this will not be forthcoming before 2018. Therefore, is this the time to re-examine the AWG's terms of reference?

Council approved revising the AWG Terms of reference already and that has been held back based on staff resources as well as waiting for the overarching Policy to come forward. The shift to an annual work plan if approved, and linkage with Council's Strategic Plan seem to create the ability to for individualized planning for each Committee. For example, for AWG that ties in nicely to the development of the accessibility framework as a workplan item and with the resourcing tie in it will help create the opportunity to move that forward in a package to Council.

Committee members Questions

6. The AWG has been told that staff will not support a call for new members given that the committee review is underway, yet it will be very difficult for the committee to work on the terms of reference without an approved plan. Given how long away a plan is, would the clerk reconsider and issue a call for new members in short order?

With Council's direction to move forward with new Terms of Reference for the AWG, it is those new Terms of Reference that will indicate what the membership is. This is behind the notion of not moving forward to fill any further positions until the Committee's composition is confirmed by Council. I am not familiar with the process for each individual committee and Terms of Reference tend to be created by the City, approved by Council to set up the mandate for the Committee.