

Resource Implications of the Environmental Task Force's Proposed Governance Model for Advanced Environmental Decision-Making

(City Council on December 14, 15 and 16, 1999, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The Policy and Finance Committee recommends the adoption of the report (November 22, 1999) from the Chief Administrative Officer, subject to amending Recommendation No. (1) (iv) by inserting after the words “Environmental Task Force” the words, “and its successor the Sustainability Roundtable”, so that Recommendation No. (1) (iv) now reads as follows:

“(1)(iv) each Commissioner, in consultation with the Environmental Task Force and its successor the Sustainability Roundtable should review the need for and the support provided to Departmental Program Advisory Committees and City-owned Site Specific Advisory Committees, as listed in attachment No. 1 and as appropriate to their departmental functions and needs, and report thereon to the appropriate standing committee of Council;”.

The Policy and Finance Committee submits the following report (November 22, 1999) from the Chief Administrative Officer:

Purpose:

This report examines the resource implications of the Environmental Task Force's "Proposed Governance Model for Advanced Environmental Decision Making". It also reviews the role of existing environmental advisory committees and makes recommendations regarding the continuing need for them.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The recommendations in this report do not result in the need for additional financial resources. The extent of staff support required by the Sustainability Roundtable and other advisory committees referred to in this report can be achieved from within existing resources. The establishment of an Environmental Auditor position can be achieved within Audit Services' existing budget allocation.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Council adopt the Environmental Task Force's "Proposed Governance Model for Advanced Environmental Decision Making for the City of Toronto", dated July 6, 1999, subject to the following amendments:

- (i) to avoid confusion, Council should appoint just one member of Council as the Sustainability Advocate, and the Standing Committee members who are appointed to sit on the Sustainability Roundtable should not be named Committee Sustainability Advocates;
 - (ii) because the Sustainability Roundtable will be a single City-wide forum and the key advisory body to the Policy and Finance Committee, Council should not support the retention or establishment of separate Community Council Environmental Committees;
 - (iii) Council should disband the General Environmental Advisory Committees and the Council Environmental Sub-committees as listed in attachment No. 1 because the main functions of these two groups of committees have been assumed by either the Environmental Task Force or will be assumed by the proposed Sustainability Roundtable;
 - (iv) each Commissioner, in consultation with the Environmental Task Force, should review the need for and the support provided to Departmental Program Advisory Committees and City-owned Site Specific Advisory Committees, as listed in Attachment No. 1 and as appropriate to their departmental functions and needs, and report thereon to the appropriate standing committee of Council; and
- (2) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

On March 25, 1998, the former Works and Utilities Committee considered a report from the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services outlining the role of special committees and citizen advisory groups with responsibility for environmental matters. The Works and Utilities Committee requested each of the committees listed in that report to advise the Chief Administrative Officer on its work and potential new role in the new City of Toronto, including such matters as:

- (a) the ongoing need for its work, if any;
- (b) areas of overlap involving its work and that of any other committee;
- (c) the relationship of its work to that of the environmental Task Force;
- (d) its anticipated ongoing need for staff support from the City; and
- (e) its budget and other resource needs.

The Works and Utilities Committee requested the Chief Administrative Officer to report on these responses, together with any recommendations he may deem appropriate (Works and Utilities

Report No. 3 (22) (d) adopted by Council on April 16 and 17, 1998, and Special Committee to Review the Final Report of the Toronto Transition Team Report No. 6 (7) (b) adopted by Council May 13, 14 and 15, 1998).

On July 27, 28, 29 and 30, 1999, Council adopted Policy and Finance Report No. 4 (32), entitled "Process for Adopting a New Governance Structure for Advanced Environmental Decision Making". Council directed the Chief Administrative Officer, in consultation with the Environmental Task Force, to report back to the Policy and Finance Committee on:

- (a) the future of the environmental advisory groups, ensuring the adherence to the principles outlined in section IX of the Environmental Task Force's July 6, 1999 report, "The Proposed Governance Model for Advanced Environmental Decision Making for the City of Toronto" as part of the forthcoming report on "Existing Environmental Committees and the Environmental Task Force" (i.e. as requested by the former Works and Utilities Committee); and
- (b) the resource reallocation, staff reassignment and any additional resource implications of the political and administrative governance model outlined in the Environmental Task Force's report.

This report responds to the above-noted requests.

Comments:

- (A) Resource Implications of the Environmental Task Force's Proposed Governance Model:

Highlights of the Environmental Task Force's Proposed Governance Model:

The key elements of the Task Force's "Proposed Governance Model for Advanced Environmental Decision Making for the City of Toronto" are:

- (1) designation of the Chief Administrative Officer as the "Sustainability Lead" and his appointment of a senior staff person to coordinate the preparation of a sustainability plan and the incorporation of sustainability into the City's policies, programs and decision making processes;
- (2) the establishment of a "Sustainability Roundtable" to promote actions based on sustainability in the City of Toronto, to advise Council on matters related to sustainability and to issue an annual "State of Sustainability Report" to Council;
- (3) the appointment of a member of Council as the "Sustainability Advocate";
- (4) the appointment of a member of each standing committee (other than Administration Committee) as a "Committee Sustainability Advocate" to provide a linkage between the Sustainability Roundtable and the respective standing committees;

- (5) the development of a “sustainability audit” by the City Auditor;
- (6) the establishment of an “Environmental Auditor” position within Audit Services;
- (7) the submission by each Commissioner of an annual report to the appropriate standing committee responding to the Environmental Auditor’s report; and
- (8) the continuation and/or establishment of community council environment committees.

Administrative Coordination of Sustainability Issues:

The designation of the CAO as sustainability lead is appropriate, given the coordination and integration mandate of the office.

Within the Chief Administrator’s Office, lead responsibility for coordinating the preparation of a sustainability plan and ensuring that sustainability principles and objectives become incorporated into policies, programs and decisions, aligns well with the current responsibilities of the Director of Strategic and Corporate Policy. The Strategic and Corporate Policy Division already coordinates preparation of the Corporate Strategic Plan and State of the City reporting; it plays the lead role within the administration in developing corporate policies to guide the performance, quality and integrity of the City’s activities; and it includes the Healthy City mandate which entails ensuring the integration of sustainability and healthy city principles into public policies and programs. The Environmental Task Force report will help to provide a framework and focus for these responsibilities.

A Toronto Interdepartmental Environment Team (TIE) was established in 1998. This committee is co-chaired by the CAO and the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services and focuses on environmental matters rather than the broader scope of sustainability. TIE is a valuable tool for interdepartmental cooperation and coordination and has liaised well with the activities of the Environmental Task Force. TIE will continue. It, too, will provide a means to coordinate the implementation of forthcoming Task Force recommendations on the environment.

Sustainability Roundtable:

The mandate and structure of the roundtable and its proposed reporting relationship to Council through the Policy and Finance Committee suggest a more formal approach to the conduct of its meetings and transmittal of its reports and communications. In that case, it is appropriate for secretariat support to be provided by the City Clerk. The City Clerk has advised that this will be possible to do within existing resources for a single, city-wide roundtable.

The establishment of additional formal environmental committees at the community council level would duplicate the role of the city-wide roundtable. It is understood that community based committees, organizations and networks exist within community council districts. The roundtable may choose to consult with these or draw them into its processes in various ways, but they do not need to become a part of the formal City structure supported by the City Clerk. The City Clerk has advised that existing secretariat resources cannot stretch to support the creation of formal environmental committees at the community council level. There is a fuller review of existing environmental committees later in this report.

Sustainability Advocates:

Council has several precedents in appointing “advocates” on a number of important issues including seniors issues and children and youth issues. A sustainability advocate can play an important role on Council, too. The naming of sustainability advocates on the standing committees may cause confusion about who is actually the spokesperson on sustainability issues. It is recommended that there be just one member of Council who is named Sustainability Advocate. It is appropriate for standing committees to have representation on the roundtable but unnecessary for them to be officially titled “advocate”.

Environmental Auditor and Sustainability Audit:

The City Auditor advises that he supports the establishment of an Environmental Auditor position and has made this a high priority within Audit Services. The function will provide significant value to the City with respect to identifying risks, ensuring compliance with applicable legislation, City policies and accounting guidelines, ensuring necessary funding of liabilities is provided, and determining that issues are met by departments, agencies, boards and commissions.

Initially, one Environmental Auditor position will be sufficient. The position will be responsible for working with departments and agencies, boards and commissions to:

- (i) inventory sites, areas and programs that have environmental implications;
- (ii) identify the level of risk to the City; and
- (iii) and develop an audit program to identify problem areas, assess risk (from a financial, operational and environmental perspective) and determine compliance.

This position will also develop the report on how Audit Services will develop and conduct a sustainability audit.

Initially, the Environmental Auditor position and audits will be implemented from within existing Audit Services resources. Following an assessment of the issues, scope, risks and other factors, Audit Services will be in a better position to determine and justify any additional resources required on an ongoing basis to carry out the environmental audit

function and meet the City's needs in this regard. At some point there may also be the need to utilize the expertise of outside resources, if that expertise does not exist internally, to assist in specific environmental areas.

(B) Review of Existing Environmental Committees:

The following comments are based on written and oral feedback received from the environmental committees, information from other key informants, as well as feedback which was provided to the Environmental Task Force during its consultations regarding its "Proposed Governance Model for Advanced Environmental Decision Making".

Range of Committees Included in this Review:

This report focuses mainly on the committees which were named in the Works and Emergency Services Commissioner's report to the March 25, 1998 Works and Utilities Committee. That listing was comprehensive at the time it was developed in that it reflected what would narrowly have been defined as environmental committees of Council and advisory committees. Since then, new committees have emerged and others have disbanded. Thus, this report also makes reference to a broader group of advisory committees, task forces, and sub-committees which might also have been included within the definition used had they been in existence at the time. A list of the committees considered in this review is provided in Attachment No. 1 at the end of this report.

History of the City's Environmental Committees:

The former municipalities established numerous advisory committees to assist councils and staff in making decisions which impact upon the quality of Toronto's environment. These committees were established for different purposes:

- (i) to assist with a short term 'planning' mandate on a particular issue;
- (ii) to advise on specific departmental programs; and
- (iii) to provide on-going input into the Council decision making process.

Over time, there emerged an ad-hoc assortment of advisory groups and Council subcommittees established to meet specific needs, but generally lacking a policy context for either the issue at hand or the process of citizen participation. In addition, different Councils and departments assigned different levels of staff support to each advisory committee. This had an impact on the nature and volume of each committee's workload as well as on the breadth and depth of committees' mandates.

The advisory committees were established under different municipal government structures, each having a different location for the 'environmental' function within the administration and the Council committee structure. For example, public involvement in the review of development proposals on contaminated lands was facilitated through the

Public Health Department in the former City of Toronto, the Works Department in the former City of Etobicoke and a Council Advisory Subcommittee in the former Borough of East York. Given this history, the placement of committees within the current structure of the City of Toronto may not be entirely appropriate to the functions of the current City departments or the roles of the Council committees.

The former municipalities also developed different approaches to the way in which communities and individuals were brought into the decision making process. This, too affected the nature and composition of the environmental committees. For example, the former Metro had citizen-only advisory committees to staff functions (such as the Metro Works Department). In contrast, the former Cities of North York and Toronto involved citizens directly on Council environmental sub-committees.

The Roles of Environmental Committees:

Environmental committees play several different roles. Some roles are directly related to a committee's mandate. Other roles evolve over time as a group matures, becomes aware of new needs, or is influenced by the interests of members or staff support. Most committees play many roles, such as one or more of the following:

- (i) General Advisory. The committee provides general public opinion;
- (ii) Technical Input. The committee members provide technical expertise as input to City policy development;
- (iii) Outreach and Public Education. The committee is a vehicle to reach out and educate the community on a particular issue;
- (iv) Community Liaison. The committee links the City to community organizations and citizens; and
- (v) Community Activities and Special Events. The committee is a forum to organize community activities and public events.

Types of Environmental Committees:

The committees named in the Works and Emergency Services Commissioner's report to the March 25, 1998 Works and Utilities Committee and other committees which have emerged over the past year can be grouped into the following eight categories.

- (1) departmental program advisory committees advise departments on specific programs. These programs are within the mandate of a single department;
- (2) city-owned site specific advisory committees advise departments on issues related to the functioning or programming at a City owned site;

- (3) area specific advisory committees advise the City on a number of environmental issues related to a particular geographic area. The area is not a City owned property;
- (4) issue specific advisory committees advise City Council or staff on an issue which has City-wide or multi-departmental implications;
- (5) time Limited Task Groups are committees and task forces which have been established to advise the City on time-specific planning, policy or other strategic initiatives;
- (6) general Environmental Advisory committees advise Council on all environmental matters;
- (7) Council Environmental sub-committees are general environmental advisory committees which were established as a sub-committee of Council; and
- (8) independent committees are independent non-profit organizations, community groups or advisory committees to non-city agencies.

The committees listed in Attachment No.1 are organized into these categories.

City Support for Environmental Committees:

The former municipalities supported environmental committees in different ways. Even within a particular category there were different levels of staff support. For example, in the category of general environmental advisory committees, North York provided the equivalent of one half-time FTE and Clerk's support, whereas in Etobicoke only Clerk's support was provided.

Within a given municipality, there were also different levels of support for different issues. For example, within the former City of Toronto, The Task Force to Bring Back the Don was allocated the equivalent of one FTE, whereas the Garrison Creek Advisory Committee was not directly allocated any staff, and the Toronto City Cycling Committee was allocated three FTEs.

Drawing on the findings from the review, the Toronto Interdepartmental Environment Team (TIE) will examine opportunities to better coordinate staff support to the area specific, issue specific and time limited task forces and committees.

Benefits of Environmental Committees:

The City and the public have derived four main benefits from the environmental committees:

- (1) the environmental committees provide leverage to a wide range of community and corporate resources available to make environmental improvements. City resources dedicated to assisting the committee members who provide advisory and other functions lever dedicated volunteer hours and resources to the benefit of the environment and hence the community. For example, the Task Force to Bring Back the Don estimates that they

lever close to ten times the resources the City contributes to the fulfilment of their mandate;

- (2) expertise is also levered through the environmental committees. The Committee members are often technical experts with more knowledge of the issue at hand than City staff. The City benefits from this on-going 'pro-bono' consultation with many expert community members. Expertise comes in many forms including knowledge of Toronto's natural environment, knowledge of Toronto's communities and knowledge of environmental initiatives in other jurisdictions;
- (3) the committees provide a means to engage and educate the public and City Council. Volunteers are often met with less skepticism than a paid staff person when it comes to the seriousness of an issue; and
- (4) the committees provide the means to 'take the public pulse' on an issue of importance to the City. They do this either indirectly, through a gauge of their own membership, or they can be a vehicle for direct consultation with the public, usually through the contacts of each individual member.

Changes in Committee Status and Other Related Changes Since Amalgamation:

The General Environmental Advisory Committees and the Council Environmental Sub-committees are no longer functioning today. Most existed to meet the needs of different structures and, in the new City, have either been replaced by the Environmental Task Force or staff functions which have found other ways to incorporate community perspectives. One example is the development review function which was performed by East York Environmental Advisory Committee and which is being incorporated into the staff proposal for the development review of contaminated sites across the entire City.

The Environmental Task Force's governance model for advanced environmental decision making proposes a structure which would take on most of the functions played by the General Environmental Advisory Committees and the Council Environmental Sub-committees in the former municipalities on an on-going basis.

The Toronto Interdepartmental Environment Team (TIE) has developed a structure which includes community members on sub-committees. This provides a way for environmental groups to work directly with staff on policy development and partnerships regarding environmental issues. This function, too, replaces a role that was part of the mandate of some of the General Environmental Advisory Committees.

Recommendations for the Future of the Environmental Committees:

Because the main functions of the General Environmental Advisory Committees and the Council Environmental Sub-committees have been either assumed by the Environmental Task Force or will be assumed by the proposed Sustainability Roundtable, it is recommended that these two groups of committees as listed in Attachment No. 1 be disbanded.

It is further recommended that each Commissioner, in consultation with the Environmental Task Force, should review the need for and the support provided to Departmental Program Advisory Committees and City-owned Site Specific Advisory Committees, as listed in Attachment No. 1 and as appropriate to their departmental functions and needs, and report thereon to the appropriate standing committee of Council. These advisory committees provide advice and support to departmental programs and sites and therefore their work should not likely overlap with the work of the proposed Sustainability Roundtable.

The review of environmental advisory committees has highlighted the many and different ways in which citizens become involved in governance and government. The review findings reinforce the need to examine citizen participation in general and through advisory committees so that guidelines can be developed to bring some consistency across the corporation to the ways in which citizens are involved in local governance. On March 2, 3 and 4, 1999 Council adopted a recommendation of the Special Committee To Review the Final Report of the Toronto Transition Team that “the City of Toronto sponsor a forum designed to develop further the roles of the City government in citizen participation” (Special Committee Report No. 2 (2)). Planning for the forum is underway. The forum and other initiatives related to citizen participation will benefit from the findings of this review.

Conclusions:

This report assesses the resource implications of the political and administrative governance model outlined in the Environmental Task Force’s report. It also outlines the findings of a review of existing environmental advisory groups and comments on the continued need for them. The Task Force’s governance model is supportable within existing resources and, on that basis, is endorsed in this report, subject to a small number of amendments.

Amalgamation has led to some of the former environmental committees becoming inactive. The proposed establishment of a single city-wide Sustainability Roundtable provides the opportunity to rationalize the City’s approach to environmental advisory committees.

The Chair of the Environmental Task Force was consulted during the preparation of this report and concurs with its recommendations.

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Classification of Existing Environmental Advisory Committees:

Departmental Program Advisory Committees:

Biosolids Advisory Group
Solid Waste Management Industry Consultation Committee

City-owned Site Specific Advisory Committees:

Highland Creek Treatment Plant Neighbourhood Advisory Committee
Main Sewage Treatment Plant Neighbourhood Liaison Committee (now the Ashbridges Bay Sewage Treatment Plant Neighbourhood Liaison Committee)
R.C. Harris Filtration Plant Public Liaison Committee
High Park Citizens' Natural Environmental Sub-Committee (of the High Park Citizen's Advisory Committee)
Don Valley Brick Works Operating and Programming Committee
Sherwood Park Advisory Committee

Area Specific Advisory Committees:

Bring Back the Don Task Force
Garrison Creek Citizens Advisory Committee

Issue Specific Advisory Committees:

Storm Water Group

Time Limited Task Groups:

Wet Weather Flow Master Plan Steering Committee
Toronto Water Efficiency Plan Public Advisory Committees

General Environmental Advisory Committees:

East York Environmental Advisory Committee
City of York Environmental Advisory Committee
Scarborough Environmental Advisory Committee

Council Sub-committee Environmental Committees:

North York Environment Committee
Etobicoke Environmental Advisory Committee

Independent Committees:

Friends of Highland Creek

Port Union Shoreline Improvements Working Committee
Toronto Bay Initiative
Canada Metals Steering Committee
Emery Creek Environmental Association
South Riverdale Environmental Liaison Committee
Tommy Thompson Park Natural Areas Advisory Committee
All section D of the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services' report to the March 25
Works and Utilities Committee

No Longer Active:

Anti-smog Working Group
Clean Air Task Force
Pesticide Use Working Group
Toronto Board of Health Environmental Subcommittee
Soil Contamination Issues Task Force
Toronto Recycling Action Committee
William Dempsey Eco-park Public Advisory Committee
Pesticide Use Working Group (Scarlett Woods Working Group)
Solid Waste Management Public Liaison Committee
Committees Omitted from the First Report:

Cycling Committee

New Committees:

Water Efficiency Review Committee
Toronto Pedestrian Committee
Emery Creek Neighbourhood Liaison Committee
3 Rs Subcommittee of Works Committee

The Policy and Finance Committee reports, for the information of Council, having also had before it a communication (December 1, 1999) from Ms. Anne Golden, President, United Way of Greater Toronto, advising of the United Way's support of the proposed Sustainability Roundtable recommended by the Environmental Task Force; and hoping that Council support the proposed Sustainability Roundtable.