

March 23, 2005

TO: Policy and Finance Committee

FROM: Councillor G. Mammoliti, Chair
Council Reference Group on Mid-term Changes to the Council-Committee Structure

SUBJECT: Recommendations for Mid-term Changes to the Council-Committee Structure and Process

Background

On behalf of the Council Reference Group, I am pleased to submit our recommendations for improvements to Committees and Council.

We met as a Reference Group four times. At two of our meetings we invited all Members of Council to share their views and ideas with us.

While the main intent of the Reference Group was to review the standing committee structure for mid-term changes, we also identified other governance and procedural changes that we think Council can make now to improve the decision-making process, keeping in mind that a more thorough review of procedural issues is being done by Councillor Giambrone's working group on the procedural by-law.

In particular, Members shared their concerns about making better use of our time in Council meetings and we are recommending actions that will address those concerns. Members also shared ideas for changes to the standing committee structure and mandates and we are making several recommendations in that area.

Recommendations:

Standing Committees

Recommendation 1: Create a special Rapid Affordable Housing Committee composed of five members of Council, to consider and make recommendations on all affordable housing matters and affordable housing policy issues of both City-wide and local interest; and

the Rapid Affordable Housing Committee report to the Policy and Finance Committee except for matters requiring a statutory public hearing in which case it will report directly to Council.

The new Committee will bring together affordable housing matters that are currently considered by other Committees and Community Councils. This will ensure that affordable housing is dealt with as a City-wide issue and recognize that Council has identified affordable housing as a priority. All staff who now attend those Committees will be required to attend the new Rapid Affordable Housing Committee to ensure co-ordination in one place of planning, housing, transportation and other matters as they relate to affordable housing. The Committee will consider projects being processed through the Let's Build Program, private and not-for-profit projects, and projects within TCHC's mandate for new and redeveloped affordable housing projects.

For example the new Committee will:

- consider items now dealt with by the Planning and Transportation Committee for affordable housing related applications of City-wide interest for Official Plan amendments, Zoning By-law amendments, plans of subdivision approvals and related matters;
- make recommendations on housing policies and funding of social housing projects now considered by the Community Services Committee;
- consider and make recommendations on affordable housing applications that are currently considered by Community Councils;
- hold public meetings required under section 17, 34, and 51 of the Planning Act (OPAs, ZBLAs, plans of subdivision) for affordable housing matters within one or more Community Council jurisdictions, now undertaken by Community Councils;
- consider matters now dealt with by other Committees related to the acquisition and sale of City property involving affordable housing.

Recommendation 2: The CAO report to the May 5, 2005 Policy and Finance Committee with a detailed terms of reference for the new Rapid Affordable Housing Committee so that it can be operational by the end of June and, in consultation with the City Clerk, recommend the necessary amendments to the Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 27, Council Procedures to reflect this change.

Recommendation 3: Maintain the current Economic Development and Parks Committee with its present mandate.

Several options were discussed regarding the Economic Development and Parks Committee:

- maintain the current EDP Committee;
- split the Committee into two separate committees, one for Parks, Forestry and Recreation issues and one for Economic Development, Culture and Tourism issues;
- disperse the current functions to other Committees, e.g., to the Community Services Committee or the Planning and Transportation Committee.

The workload of the current EDP Committee is enough to sustain a Standing Committee: the Committee met 9 times in 2004 and considered 181 items. The majority of the items (approximately 110 of the 181 items) related to economic development, culture, tourism

and special events. Maintaining the current Committee will also maintain the functional co-ordination and Council Members' expertise and interest that has developed over time.

Recommendation 4: Move responsibility for making recommendations on the acquisition, sale and leasing of City property and offers of compensation under the *Expropriations Act* from the Administration Committee to the Policy and Finance Committee, and amend the Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 27, Council Procedures to reflect this change.

Moving this responsibility will bring an additional major corporate policy issue with significant financial implications to the Policy and Finance Committee which already has responsibility for human resources, and fiscal policy and budget.

Council Functioning

Recommendation 5: Establish a Question Period at the beginning of each Council meeting (following the agenda review), on a pilot basis for the remainder of the term; and the City Clerk assess the functioning of the pilot and report to the Policy and Finance Committee on the assessment at the beginning of the next Council term; and

the Question Period have the following rules:

- **Each Member of Council will be allotted 10 minutes to ask questions of the Mayor, the Standing Committee Chair, or staff on items that have been held.**
- **There will be no extensions and answers must be short and succinct.**
- **The entire 10 minutes must be used in one block of time (no carry over of time).**
- **There will be no questions of staff during debate of the item, unless the Chair determines that there is a need for statutory officers such as the City Solicitor or the Treasurer to advise Council of legal or financial implications to amendments after question period.**
- **The Chair may still permit staff to make a statement if the integrity of staff has been impugned or called into question by a member at any point during the meeting (Section 27-20, Municipal Code)**
- **During debate, questions of movers of motions will be limited to 3 minutes.**

Recommendation 6: The City Clerk report to the May 5, 2005 Policy and Finance Committee on implementation issues and concerns related to establishing the Question Period, including any interim procedural rules required during the pilot period.

The benefits of Question Period are that it will improve the functioning of Council and save time overall. It will also encourage Council Members to attend Standing Committee meetings more regularly, even if they are not members, so that they can be aware of all of the issues and have the opportunity to hear from members of the public and staff at that time. It will also encourage Council Members to seek briefings from staff prior to the

Council meeting. No final amendments to the Council Procedures will be made until the success of the pilot is assessed.

Recommendation 7: Reduce speaking time allocation at Council meetings to 4 minutes with a 4 minute extension and reduce questions of Councillors to clarify their motions to 3 minutes, and amend the Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 27, Council Procedures to reflect these changes.

Recommendation 8: Chair to turn off the microphones of individual members when their time limit is reached.

These changes will reduce meeting time overall and will encourage Members of Council to be clear, succinct and efficient in their comments. The changes will be supported by technology modifications which are being developed to improve audio-visual functioning in the Council Chamber and give the Chair more control over the microphones.

Recommendation 9: Establish a commentator role for the new Rapid Affordable Housing Committee on a pilot basis until October 2005, and that the Mayor appoint a Member of Council to carry out this role; and that the City Clerk report to the Policy and Finance Committee recommending interim procedural rules required during the pilot period.

This commentator will provide an additional view, or a differing view, to that being recommended by the Committee. This will ensure that all sides of an issue are raised at Council, especially on important or controversial matters, and it will provide a meaningful role to more Members of Council. During the pilot period, speaking order for Rapid Affordable Housing Committee issues will be: 1) Committee Chair, 2) commentator, and 3) item holder. No final amendments to the Council Procedures will be made until the success of the pilot is assessed.

Recommendation 10: Authorize the Mayor to appoint:

- **Standing Committee Chairs**
- **Deputy Mayor(s)**
- **Audit Committee Chair**
- **Budget Advisory Committee Chair**
- **Employee and Labour Relations Committee designated Chair (if the Mayor does not wish to Chair)**
- **The new Rapid Housing Committee Chair**
- **Nominating Committee and the Striking Committee designated Chairs (if the Mayor does not wish to Chair)**
- **Chairs of the Roundtables on the Environment; Arts and Culture; Beautiful City; Seniors; Children, Youth and Education; Access, Equity and Human Rights;**
- **The Chair of the Film Board**

- **Chairs of other special committee which report directly to Standing Committees, except sub-committees; and**

that the Mayor's appointments not be subject to debate or amendments by the Striking Committee, and a 2/3 majority vote of Council be required to debate or amend the Mayor's appointments.

Recommendation 11: Amend the Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 27, Council Procedures or the terms of reference of the body where required to make these changes to the appointment process.

In the current process the Mayor recommends the membership of the Striking Committee to Council and Council can approve or amend the Mayor's recommendations. Once established the Striking Committee recommends appointments to various positions and bodies. In the new process, the Mayor will submit his appointments list to the Striking Committee at the time that it is considering the City Clerk's canvass of interest from Members of Council. The recommended change will make the process more transparent and will give the Mayor a clearer and more effective role in the appointments process.

Recommendation 12: Improve the budget deliberation process at Council by adopting an interim procedure allotting 30 minutes for each Member to speak at the beginning of the Council meeting, to ask questions of the Mayor, Budget Chair, Standing Committee Chair, Community Council Chair, or staff, and to speak and place motions; and follow the speaking period with deliberation and voting on the budget by program with capital and operating budgets considered together.

Recommendation 13: Request the CAO to review the current situation regarding Council's ability to delegate to Standing Committees, Community Councils, or staff, within Council approved policy.

Many of the ideas and changes discussed during the Reference Group's process were about being more effective and reducing the overall amount of time spent in Committee and Council meetings. Many people feel that additional improvements could be made if Council could delegate more of its decision making, within approved policies. The current delegation practices have not been reviewed in several years.

Recommendation 14: Request the Mayor and the CAO to report to the Policy and Finance Committee, when the implications of the City of Toronto Act review are clearer, on a process for Council's review of longer term changes to the governance system.

Recommendation 15: the City Solicitor be authorized to introduce the necessary bills in Council.

Recommendation 16: the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary actions to give effect to these recommendations.

