

September 16, 2019

To: Mayor Tory and Members of the Executive Committee

Re: EX 8.7 - Creating a Gender Equity Strategy and Gender Equality Office for Toronto

The current proposal before your committee builds upon Toronto City Council's history and leadership role in advancing women's equality and working towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination. A summary of these are outlined in the attached Appendix.

I am writing from the vantage point of being a member of the Toronto Public Service for about 30 years (1981 to 2010) with responsibilities for various equity and human rights functions as well as civic engagement activities.

The establishment of two additional positions should be regarded as the **restoration** of resources to address equity issues. This effort is not "new".

Critical to success will be the relationship with the recently established units and committees to address Black-African and Aboriginal/Indigenous issues, Disability issues, engagement with the community, feminist and women's groups and continued evaluation of the performance of city divisions.

At amalgamation, and as noted in the 1999 staff reports prepared to respond to 97 recommendations in Councillor Joe Mihvec's Task Force on Equity and Access Report, **over 40+ staff positions** existed across the former municipal governments in Toronto. Those resources as well as the policies have been eroded continually and the City is nowhere near the level of support which were in place prior to amalgamation.

Yours truly,

Ceta Ramkhalawansingh
Toronto.
ceta_r@yahoo.ca

APPENDIX

Some noteworthy dates in the City of Toronto's history.

- **1920's** - Constance E Hamilton was the first woman elected to a municipal council;
- **1920** Mayor Coatsworth led a delegation to Queen's Park with a petition signed by over 20K to support women getting the vote
- **1970** Mayor Crombie established a Mayor's Task Force on the Status of Women in response to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Status of women.
- The Mayor's Task Force's work led to the creation of a job evaluation program which reduced the wage gap between men and women workers, addressed public health and childcare issues
- In **1978-79**, City Council established an Equal Opportunity Office which was later expanded from gender to include race, disability and Indigenous issues.
- **1979** - City Council recognised the 50th anniversary of women being declared persons and established the Constance E Hamilton Award.

The **1980's** witnessed the following:

- The adoption of Goals and Timetables in employment for the public service and for appointments to boards and commissions;
- Changes to fire-fighter recruitment
- Prohibition of beauty-pageants from all civic squares
- Introduction of non-discrimination policy for all civic agencies, grant recipients and contractors;
- Deputation led by Mayor Eggleton to advocate for the inclusion of sexual orientation in human rights code
- Symposium on "women and work" and commissioning of studies on housing, transportation, employment, the Charter, education
- Establishment of scholarships on public health and women's studies at U of T
- Safe City Committee was established and created the safety audit guidelines

During the **1990's**

- Breast feeding on City premises
- Firefighter recruitment strategies were introduced to improve diversity
- Establishment of Audit Reference Group to address the Audit of Jane Doe report
- A comprehensive Workplace Human Rights and Harassment policy and investigation process was introduced
- Task Force on Community Access and Equity report was adopted with over 100 recommendations and establishment of community advisory committees and working groups

From **2000 to 2010**

- The Plan of Action for the elimination of Racism and All forms of Discrimination was approved after a massive consultation process involving over 1000 persons. This POA responded to Toronto's leadership role in the FCM's Coalition of Cities on Racism and Discrimination
- The Regional Champions strategy to increase women's participation in political life was established in conjunction with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Adoption of Accessibility Plan and Accessible Design Guidelines
- Multilingual Policy
- Employee Accommodation Policy
- Establishment of Profession to Profession Mentoring Program
- Establishment of mentoring program for Black employees
- Memorandum of Understanding regarding immigrants and refugees
- Hate Activity Policy
- Round Table on Access and Equity piloted an "equity lens"
- City Council approved the "equity lens" to evaluate programs and policies
- AODA Accessibility plan was introduced
- A Statement of Commitment to Urban Indigenous Communities in Toronto was adopted
- Face to face meeting of city government and Aboriginal leaders
- Introduction of "equity indicators" to measure progress in implementation of Divisional Access and Equity Action Plans