

January 19, 2015

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of the Executive Committee,

Re: EX2.1 - Council Advisory Bodies for the 2014 to 2018 Term of City Council

Recommendation:

That the Executive Committee request the Mayor to consult with interested members of council and leadership organizations on race relations, gender equity, LGBTTQ issues, immigration and refugee issues on the establishment of a process or structure to advise Council on policy and program issues on matters that are of importance to these communities.

Overview:

This recommendation is presented because the report which has been tabled does not address how overarching and overlapping issues regarding the broad array of diversity issues can be brought forward through a citizen advisory process.

At present, there is no formal structure through which advice can be given to Council, or for that matter no mechanism to evaluate the status reports provided to Council on equity issues, except for Aboriginal Affairs and Disability Issues.

Toronto City Council has benefitted from the advice provided through these structures, whether it was Mayor Crombie's Task Force on the Status of Women, Alderman Anne Johnston's Committee on Disability Issues, Councillor Rae's Committee on LGBTTQ issues, or former Mayors' Eggleton, Hall and Rowlands and Lastman Mayor's Committees on Race and Ethnic Relations, Councillor McConnell's Committee on the Status of Women and Reference Group on the Jane Doe Audit.

Council Action - 1999

Post amalgamation, and on the advice of a the Task Force on Community Access and Equity led by Councillor Mihevc and as recommended by the Transition Team, Toronto City Council established 5 Community Advisory Committees (*Aboriginal Affairs, Disability Issues, Race and Ethnic Relations, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender Issues, Status of Women*) and 4 Working Groups (*Elimination of Hate Activity, Employment Equity, Immigration and Refugee Issues, Language Equity and Literacy Issues*).

Each Advisory Committee was composed of up to 18 persons selection through a public process and chaired or co-chaired by at least one member of council. The working groups were flexible in composition and their membership was derived from institutions, community organizations as well as individuals who had expertise in the areas addressed by the working groups.

Council Action 2001-2003

In December 2001, Council appointed a Diversity Advocate and approved a 10 point action plan which included convening joint meetings of all the access equity advisory committees. A Reference Group, composed of the chairs of all the Working Groups and Advisory Committees, developed Council's Plan of Action (POA) for the elimination of racism and discrimination. This POA was prepared through an extensive community consultation process involving over 1000 persons. The POA was adopted by Council in 2003 and it provided the basis for on-going work and setting strategic directions.

Council Action 2004 to 2010

In 2004, a Round Table on Access and Equity was established in addition to Committees on Aboriginal Affairs and Disability Issues as well as an Immigration and Refugee Working Group. A major work activity of the Roundtable was the development of the equity lens, which was adopted by Council in 2006.

In 2009, the Executive Committee considered the report (EX35.5) - Inclusion of an Equity Analysis using the Equity Lens in Reports to City Council. This report committed the public service to including an equity analysis: *“Application of the Equity Lens is being expanded from an Equity Impact Statement to include an equity analysis in significant policy and program reports to Council. This analysis will identify the equity issues that were considered and a summary of the analysis that was undertaken.”*

In 2009, Council adopted a statement of commitment on Disability Access and in 2010 adopted a Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Communities in Toronto and a Diversity and Positive Workplace Strategy.

2010 onwards

Since 2010, the City's work on diversity issues has become invisible, even though significant work appears to be undertaken within the public service. However, the public and community advocacy groups had little or no access to these discussions.

RESOURCES

At amalgamation there were 43 staff across all the municipal structures who were working on equity. With the adoption of the Task Force report Council assigned 33 staff. This resource allocation has since been depleted significantly through a series of reorganizations. This needs to be reviewed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ceta Ramkhalawansingh