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April 1, 2019

Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee
Committee Room 1, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2

Re: Improving Representation of Persons with Disabilities on City Boards, Committees, and Tribunals

Background:

On February 11th, 2019, the People Equity and Human Rights Division (PEHR) and the City Clerk's Office held an information session to provide information to the persons with disabilities community on the requirements and recruiting processes for appointments to public boards, committees, and tribunals.

Participant feedback during the information session indicated that there are citizen concerns regarding the diversity of appointments to City boards, committees and tribunals, with particular regard to the lack of representation of persons with disabilities. Participants also discussed the potential unconscious bias on the part of the selection committee, as well as qualification requirements that exclude capable applicants.

It is important to acknowledge that the City Clerk's Office has been making significant strides towards improving diverse recruitment, particularly with regard to gender. Unfortunately, efforts toward greater inclusion do not always translate through the selection process. For example, Public Appointment statistics show that 10.5% of applicants were persons with disabilities. However, only 7.7% were appointed. These numbers are current as of January 31, 2019, and are available on the Public Appointments website.

The City of Toronto promotes itself as "home to a diverse population." This diversity should be reflected in our public appointments, to ensure that City boards, committees and tribunals are truly representative of the resident population.

Recommendation:

1) That Executive Committee direct the City Clerk, in consultation with the Executive Director, People, Equity and Human Rights and key community stakeholders, to report back to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee, on September 26, 2019, with a strategy to strengthen the recruitment and civic appointment selection process for public appointments to City boards, committees and tribunals, with the goal of increasing representation of persons with disabilities, and striving toward equitable representation by the year 2025.

Sincerely,

City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam
Ward 13, Toronto Centre

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