



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of January 31, 2019

To: Council
From: Chris Coates, City Clerk
Subject: Renters' Advisory Committee

Date: January 25, 2019

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Renters Advisory Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the November 8, 2018 Council Meeting, Council approved the formation of a Renters' Advisory Committee to help achieve the goals and advise on policy related to providing adequate and affordable housing for residents. Recruitment for this committee is in process and there is significant interest amongst community members interested in participating in the Committee. The Council Member Report and Terms of Reference are attached as Appendices A and B respectively.

The Terms of Reference that Council approved have been reviewed by staff since the Committee was created and staff have identified issues that Council may wish to consider to assist with how the Committee approaches the issues it will deal with, as well as how those issues are brought forward to Council for consideration. The revisions suggested recognize the process to move recommendations forward to Council including of a staff review to overlay on the work of the Committee. In addition, the suggested approach would also involve the establishment of a work plan, approved by Council, to ensure that the Committee is focused and in step with Council's Strategic Plan, and that the volume of issues coming back to Council can be managed effectively relative to the City's Financial Plan and the staff resources available to support the Committee.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to bring forward suggested amendments to the Terms of Reference for the recently created Renter's Advisory Committee.

BACKGROUND

Council approved the establishment of the Renter's Advisory Committee and its Terms of Reference resulting from a Council member initiative in November 2018. The Council Member Report and Terms of Reference are attached as Appendices A and B respectively. The function of Renter's Advisory Committee is to provide advice and recommendations to Victoria City Council and staff on:

- Policies to increase rental housing stock;
- Improving conditions and well-being of renters in the City of Victoria

- Strategic priorities for the city relating to renters;
- The impacts of provincial and federal legislation affecting tenants;
- Enhancing access and inclusion for renters in developing municipal policy and civic life; and
- Other matters that the committee deems relevant to the interests of renters in the City of Victoria.

The broadly based Terms of Reference suggest that issues would come before the Committee in three distinct ways:

- Referrals from Council
- Policy Initiatives and Projects brought forward for consideration by staff
- Issues identified by the Committee

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The Renters' Advisory Committee requires the appointment of up to 12 new members, each for a two-year term beginning on February 1, 2019 and ending January 31, 2021. The Terms of Reference attached as Appendix B indicate that the members of the public appointed represent diverse perspectives and experiences of renters and renters' advocates. Recruiting members is in process.

Recent experiences with active committees in the City have resulted in circumstances, in some cases, where the Committee's work cannot be effectively connected to the City's processes to assess and move them forward in a timely manner. Committee members are invested in the work they do and can be frustrated by the inability to have recommendations actioned or even advanced at times, given the workload and priorities and the resulting challenges to manage the volume and type of information coming forward.

Amending the terms of reference to establish a clear approach, a connection to Council's strategic direction, and a clear report back structure can alleviate these concerns and focus Committees in a more productive manner. In addition, that would add a layer of scale to the scope of the Committees work such that its recommendations can be managed and moved forward in a timely way without significant impact on existing workloads, essentially because the work would be anticipated and factored into the City's business plans.

This could be accomplished by amending the terms of reference adding the following as section 4.

4. Operating Requirements

- a) The Committee shall establish an annual work plan to identify the focus of the Committee for the year. The Work Plan shall be submitted for Council's consideration and approval accompanied by recommendations on the Work Plan from City Staff that will include policy considerations, connections to strategic priorities, resource and financial capacity considerations. The Work Plan will be developed based on:
 - Referrals from Council
 - Referrals from City Staff
 - Issues identified by The Committee.
- b) Council's consideration of the Work Plan will recognize the capacity of City Staff to move the matters from the Committee forward to Council as well as provide the opportunity for the consideration of any funding or resources necessary to implement the actions that the Committee recommends, that Council approves.

- c) Reporting to Council to occur through the Quarterly Update process unless for reasons of time sensitivity, a Council Liaison may bring forward a recommendation by way of a Council member motion to Committee of the Whole.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Option 1 – Amend the Terms of Reference to Add Operating Requirements (Recommended)

Option 2 – Retain existing Terms of Reference.

CONCLUSIONS

Advisory committees are an effective way to seek out and benefit from community expertise and interest. The overarching objectives of the suggested revisions are designed to foster effective, productive and satisfying community participation; provide a clear focus linked to Council's higher level planning and to recognize the resource and funding capacity limitations of the City.

Respectfully submitted,



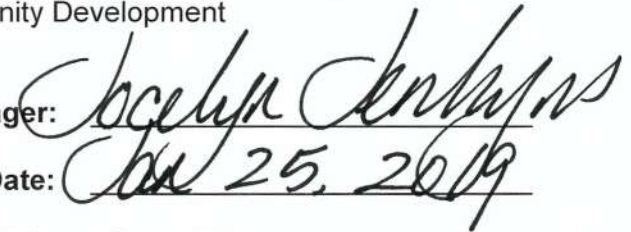
Chris Coates
City Clerk



Andrea Hudson
Acting Director of Sustainable Planning
and Community Development

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


25. 2019

Attachment A – Council Member Report – Renter's Advisory Committee

Attachment B – Renters' Advisory Committee Committee Terms of Reference