

BACKGROUND

Council approved the establishment of the RAC on November 8, 2018 and thereafter appointed twelve members representing the diverse perspectives and experiences of renters and renters' advocates. The RAC's first meeting took place in April 2019, initiating a two-year term from April 2019 to March 2021 inclusive. The RAC meets monthly between January to June and September to November, with additional special meetings including sub-committee meetings held as needed.

On October 24, 2019, Council adopted the RAC's Strategic Work Plan 2019-2021 and Terms of Reference to establish operating requirements, to address workflow, and incorporate an annual work plan and a reporting process. A progress report of the RAC Strategic Work Plan is attached to this report (Attachment A).

On February 27, 2020, Council amended the Terms of Reference (Attachment B) following a RAC recommendation, to establish new attendance requirements in order to improve committee effectiveness and efficiency.

Between March and May 2020, RAC meetings were cancelled, in abidance with provincial health orders to maintain public safety in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since June 2020, the committee's regular schedule of monthly meetings has resumed by conducting virtual meetings through Microsoft Teams.

In June 2020, Council reprioritized actions in the Victoria Housing Strategy to improve housing security in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee provided Council with input into the reprioritization of actions and have been advising on these priority actions as they are developed and implemented.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

1. Renters' Advisory Committee Membership

The Terms of Reference directs the RAC to be comprised of up to twelve (12) members of the public appointed for a two (2) year term (renewable for one additional term).

Throughout the two-year term, five committee members have resigned due to personal reasons, including relocations outside of the capital region. Two members were removed by the RAC, due to failing to meet the attendance requirements established by the Terms of Reference. As of March 2021, there are five committee members. It is recommended that new member appointments be initiated in order to ensure that the committee represents a diversity of perspectives and includes representation from tenant advocacy organizations in Victoria.

2. Renters' Advisory Committee Term Extension

Given that several of the priority Housing Strategy actions targeted for implementation in 2021-2022, focus on renters and seek to improve housing security, it is recommended that the committee's term be extended.

The RAC passed the following motion on March 16, 2021:

The Renters' Advisory Committee recommends that Council extend the Committee term, for an additional two-year term from April 2021 to November 2023 and rotate membership to provide overlapping terms as follows:

- *Fill existing vacancies on the Committee starting in April 2021*
- *Current (5 members) would finish their term in November 2022 and new members would be appointed for an additional two-year term thereafter.*

By enabling overlapping terms, members will be able to transfer their knowledge of processes, priorities and roles to new members. Should this recommendation be approved by Council, the Terms of Reference would need to be amended to follow cyclical terms, on an ongoing basis. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference are provided in Attachment C, and would replace paragraph one in Section 2:

The Renters' Advisory Committee will be comprised of up to twelve (12) members of the public appointed for two (2) year terms (renewable for one additional term), representing the diverse perspectives and experiences of renters and renters' advocates. The membership will rotate to provide overlapping terms, with six members for a one cycle term and annual recruitment to replace outgoing members.

It is noted that the term extension for newly appointed members would be greater than two and a half years (totalling 32 months from April 2021 to November 2023). Additionally, a new Strategic Work Plan would be developed and presented to Council for consideration of adoption, should the RAC's term be extended.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Option 1 (Recommended)

1. Extend the Renters' Advisory Committee as follows:
 - a. Initiate cyclical two-year terms from April 2021 to November 2023 which will realign with annual Council committee member appointments thereafter.
 - b. Rotate half of the members annually to provide overlapping terms.
 - c. Extend the term of the current committee members to November 2022.
 - d. Appoint new committee members to fill current vacancies.
 - e. Update the Terms of Reference to reflect the new cyclical term.
 - f. Continue the Committee on an ongoing basis.
2. That this motion be added to the daytime Council meeting of April 8, 2021

This option would fulfill the recommendation of the Renters' Advisory Committee and would shift the committee to operate from a fixed term to an ongoing basis.

Option 2

1. Extend the Renters' Advisory Committee term for one additional term as follows:
 - a. Extend the term April 2021 to October 2021 and appoint seven new committee members to fill vacancies for this new term.
 - b. Extend the current committee members term to October 2021.
2. That this motion be added to the daytime Council meeting of April 8, 2021.

This option would initiate one additional term which would coincide with the Council end of term.

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout their two-year term, the Renters' Advisory Committee has provided integral advice on priority Housing Strategy actions that focus on renters and rental housing. The Renters' Advisory Committee has recommended that their term be extended to an ongoing going basis and follow a cyclical format whereby half of the members are replaced annually.

Respectfully submitted,

Hollie McKeil
Housing Planner
Community Planning

Karen Hoese, Director
Sustainable Planning and Community
Development Department

Curt Kingsley
City Clerk

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.

Attachments

- Attachment A: Renters' Advisory Committee Strategic Work Plan 2019-2021 Progress Report
- Attachment B: Renters' Advisory Committee Terms of Reference 022020
- Attachment C: Renters' Advisory Committee Terms of Reference Proposed Amendments.