

Agencies, Boards, Committees and Commissions Policy C575

Council Advisory Committees

Recommendation:

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That City Policy C575, Agencies, Boards, Committees and Commissions, as outlined in Attachment 1 to Report CR_271 of the February 18, 2014, Corporate Services report CR_271, be approved.
2. That the following City Policies be repealed:
 - a. C472F Appointment Process to Certain Key Boards
 - b. C473C Appointment of Members of Council to Civic Agencies
 - c. C475A Civic Agencies Appointments
 - d. C476C Civic Agencies Reporting
 - e. C478 Process for Appointments and Reappointments of Members to City of Edmonton Quasi-Judicial Boards

Report Summary

This report addresses Council's direction of April 18, 2012, and recommends a new policy for the governance of council committees and appointments to external boards.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the April 18, 2012, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration return to City Council in the first quarter of 2013 with a draft policy that would provide ongoing clarity around the functions, roles, and responsibilities regarding Council advisory committees, including but not limited to: use, establishment, support, orientation, training, accountability, and review and a report return to include recommendations regarding an Environmental Advisory Committee.

A revised due date of February, 2014, was approved at Executive Committee.

Report

Background

In late 2010, three of Council's advisory committees asked for direction as to how they could best support Council. This led to a facilitated discussion between Council, advisory committee Chairs, and City Administration on June 21, 2011; which then led to a review of Council's advisory committees; and on April 18, 2012, to Council's direction to prepare a policy governing civic agencies.

While the development of this policy started with Council advisory committees, many of the recommended changes are also relevant to Council's decision-making boards. Administration reviewed current policies and determined that the policies could be consolidated into one, ensuring that all guidelines would be in one document.

Input from Civic Agencies

Input was sought from the 15 City agencies and six external agencies to which governing policies are most relevant. The agencies were sent a document that outlined the main elements of current policies and the new elements being proposed for their feedback.

For each of the policy elements, the document noted whether the element:

1. currently exists in a policy
2. has evolved and the policy no longer reflects current practice
3. has been approved outside of a policy and needs to be integrated into a policy (such as the expense guidelines)
4. is new to address Council's direction
5. had been questioned by agency members in the past and possible changes could be considered.

The feedback received was extensive and has been used to develop the proposed policy.

City Policy C575 -- What is Really Different

The following are key changes based on Council's direction and the feedback from civic agencies. Attachment 2 to this report provides a detailed comparison of the recommended changes.

Use, Function and Review of Council Committees

Council will continue to establish council committees when desirable to do so. Under the new policy Council would be asked to provide guidance as to the outcome Council expects, and how long the committee will need to be in existence to meet Council's expectations. Ongoing bodies will be given a date for review and advisory committees would work toward providing advice related to a policy decision of the current Council.

These changes will help to ensure that council committees are established with clear, achievable mandates, and that they are reviewed to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

Reporting

Council committees will continue to report on their activities annually; however, they will include their work plan when they report. The policy also recommends that budget information be provided when council committees report.

This change will help Council to measure the performance of each committee. Ongoing bodies will be able to report on how well they achieved their goals and to advise Council on upcoming plans. Short-term committees will be able to show Council the progress they are making on their mandate. All committees will be able to demonstrate to Council that they are making effective use of City resources.

Recruitment and Appointments

The requirement for a two-year absence from all civic agencies after having served the maximum term has been changed to require a two-year absence only from the civic agency on which the individual served, and no matter how long he or she has served. Current appointees to committees believe the current rule to be unfair to dedicated individuals that serve the maximum term and that serving on one agency should not impact their eligibility to serve on a different agency. The current rule has led appointees to leave an appointment after five years just so that they would be eligible to apply to serve on a different committee.

This change would remove an eligibility barrier that is seen as being unfair.

A two-year cooling off period before Councillors may be appointed to committees of Council has been added. The respect that citizens and Administration have for the authority of Councillors can make the transition to being seen as an individual difficult. The proposed two year break would address this issue.

Selection Process -- Short Listing

Some civic agencies have been asking for more input into the selection of members for their boards. Most often what has been asked is for the Chair to see the applications received and have an opportunity to comment. This process was successfully used on a trial basis with the Greater Edmonton Foundation.

The new policy recommends that this process be put in place for all City and external decision-making boards. The process has not been recommended for advisory committees, as the survey on this issue showed half of the committees opposed to the change.

Removal of Key Board Designation

When the term "Key Board" was developed, the definition applied to those boards where Council serves as the selection committee, and for which a certain process was used that included a search consultant. The recruitment process has evolved so that the search is now unique for each of the original Key Boards. The new policy provides flexibility for Council to determine the process to be used and when a search consultant will be hired.

Orientation and Training

The new policy requires that appointees be provided the resources they need to be successful. Administration has committed to providing Council's appointees additional

training to assist them in their work. The policy also recommends that staff working with council committees have the tools they need to understand the role of, and rules governing, council committees.

An increase in training will ensure the members of committees and relevant staff have the knowledge they need to be successful in their roles.

Environmental Advisory Committee

Section 3 of the proposed policy provides guidance for the creation of council committees. The guidelines recommend that council committees not be created for City operational purposes that fall within the responsibilities of the City Manager. On December 11, 2013, Council voted to close the Environment Initiative, as the initiative has moved into an implementation phase.

Unless Council has a specific purpose in mind for an environmental advisory committee, it is not recommended that Council create a committee at this time.

Policy

1. City Policy C472F, Appointment Process to Certain Key Boards
2. City Policy C473C, Appointment of Members of Council to Civic Agencies
3. City Policy C475A, Civic Agencies Appointments
4. City Policy C476C, Civic Agencies Reporting
5. City Policy C478, Process for appointments and reappointments of Members to City of Edmonton Quasi-Judicial Boards
6. City Policy C504, Volunteerism Policy
7. City Policy C513, Public Involvement

Corporate Outcomes

This report is consistent with the Conditions of Success for The Way Ahead; specifically, Sound Management Practices and Process

Justification of Recommendation

1. City Policy C575, Agencies, Boards, Committees and Commissions, addresses the direction given by City Council on April 18, 2012.
2. The five existing policies governing civic agencies can be repealed as City Policy C575 includes content from the existing policies.

Attachments

1. City Policy C575
2. Comparison of Processes - City Policy C575

Others Reviewing this Report

- L. Cochrane, General Manager, Community Services
- R. G. Klassen, General Manager, Sustainable Development
- D. Wandzura, General Manager, Transportation Services