

Options for Minors when Speaking at City Hall

Child Minding and Speaking Order

Recommendation

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

That Administration develop and implement a one-year pilot project for a child minding service, available for the public while they speak/attend City Council Public Hearing, Executive Committee, Urban Planning Committee and Community and Public Services Committee meetings, starting in Q2 2020, and report back to Executive Committee by the end of Q1 2021, on the results of the pilot.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the June 18, 2019, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration prepare a report to Committee with:

- a. options, including budget, facility, and other considerations, to provide free childcare on request in City Hall for members of the public while they come to speak at Council or Committee meetings.
- b. options to allow minors who register to speak the possibility to be heard first.

Executive Summary

Administration is committed to removing barriers where possible to increase participation at Council and Committee meetings ensuring that diverse voices are heard. A child minding service may increase participation by allowing some parents and guardians who may not otherwise address Council to do so. A child minding service could be located in vacant space in City Hall with minimal renovations. The main cost consideration is staffing. Administration believes that a readily available service, as opposed to an on-demand service, would reach more users as it could accommodate last-minute registrants. Administration recommends proceeding with a one-year child minding pilot project.

Allowing minors to speak first may make participation easier for young people, but may raise questions around fairness for other groups. Administration will revise the online

Request to Speak form to inform minors of the possibility of being heard first. At Statutory Public Hearings, speakers in favour will still be heard before those in opposition, but minors will be prioritized within these groups.

Report

It is important that all citizens have the opportunity to participate in local government. Removing barriers to participation ensures that Council decisions are informed by a diversity of voices.

a) Child Minding Service for Speakers

A child minding service, similar to the services at some City recreation centres, may increase public participation at Council and Committee meetings. Currently, a parent or guardian who wishes to participate in a meeting may be unable to do so because they do not have access to adequate child care. An on-site child minding service would remove this barrier for members of the public who wish to speak at a Council or Committee meeting. This report recommends a one-year child minding pilot project to examine the effect of such a service on public participation in Council and Committee meetings

Facility considerations

There is a vacant space in the southeast corner on the main floor of City Hall (as shown in Attachments 1 and 2). This space provides a check-in counter for parents or guardians to drop off children, as well as a controlled entry providing security for both staff and the participants in the child minding program. The identified space is near the facility's security desk.

Regulatory considerations

Because the parents or guardians would remain in the building, the service proposed in this report is considered child minding, not child care. Therefore, the *Alberta Child Care Licensing Act*, which sets out minimum standards that must be met in a licensed child care program to ensure that the health, safety and developmental needs of children are met, does not apply. Further, the City, as the service provider, does not require a licence. As in child minding services located within recreation centres, Administration would use the operations and the guidelines set forth by the Alberta Government for drop-in daycare centers. This would include minimum employee qualifications and minimum staff-to-child ratios as follows:

Age of Child	Staff:Child Ratio	Points per Child
0 - 11 months	1:3	4.0

12 - 18 months	1:4	3.0
19 - 35 months	1:8	1.5
4 years and over	1:12	1

1 staff member = 12 points

2 staff members = 24 points

3 staff members = 36 points

Based on the size of the space, the service could accommodate a maximum of 12 children who are at least 4 years old, or 6 children under 12 months old. The service would be staffed by three people to maintain these ratios and follow the washroom protocol outlined below.

Staffing

The service could be staffed by part-time employees with the same qualifications as child minding staff in recreation facilities. In particular, these qualifications include a minimum age of 18, valid first aid and CPR certifications, as well as a Police Information Check with Vulnerable Sector check. Staff working in multiple facilities is a possibility.

The total hourly cost of a child minding provider (including administrative and vacation time) is between \$21 and \$28. Using an estimated cost of \$25 per hour per staff member, an 8-hour meeting with three staff members would cost approximately \$600.

There are 80 regular meetings per year of the four bodies (City Council Public Hearing, Executive Committee, Urban Planning Committee, and Community and Public Services Committee) that generally attract enough speakers to merit a readily available child minding service. A readily available service for these meetings would thus have an estimated annual staffing cost of approximately \$48,000.

Other considerations

The following would be taken into consideration in developing the pilot project:

- An update to security and emergency procedures
- Arrangements for Alberta Health Services inspections
- A thorough GBA+ analysis
- Engagement with the Edmonton Youth Council and Child Friendly Edmonton
- Reporting structure for staff

- A secure check-in and check-out process
- Toys and activities for participants

The pilot would align with the operational and risk mitigation measures of the City's existing child minding services.

On Demand Child Minding Service

In this model, registrants would need to request child minding in advance of meetings to allow Administration to schedule staff for the service. This model is not recommended as advance notice requirements would pose a barrier to last-minute registrants, who may not be able to access the service. It may also prove challenging to schedule staff for an on-demand service. Administration has not been able to identify any Canadian municipalities that offer an on-demand child minding service.

Readily Available Child Minding Service

In this model, the child minding centre is open by default, and could accommodate registrants without requiring advance notice. The service would operate on a first-come, first-served basis, with pre-registration encouraged. To minimize costs and keep the pilot project to a manageable scope, Administration suggests limiting the service to the busiest meetings, which in 2018 were Statutory Public Hearings and meetings of Executive, Urban Planning, and Community and Public Services Committees. As shown in Attachment 5, these are the committees that have the most speakers.

The City of Victoria offers this service, and the City of London is in the process of setting up a service. Both are outlined in Attachment 3.

Evaluation of the Pilot

Administration would maintain metrics on program uptake as well as collect feedback from the parents and guardians using the service. Administration would also monitor requests for child minding services for the committees not included in the pilot.

A report to Council in the final quarter of the pilot (i.e., after the first nine months) would allow Council to determine whether to continue with the program, as well as its scope. Administration will monitor the usage of the child minding program and will report to Executive Committee if any significant changes are required.

Budget and Financial Implications

Based on the information available at the time, it is anticipated that a one-year pilot project would cost approximately \$55,500. This is based on estimates for staffing (\$48,000), renovation (\$2,500) and furniture and equipment (\$5,000). If Council supports undertaking this pilot, Administration will use existing funds for the set up and initial staff costs in 2019, the remainder of the required funds will be covered between reallocated funds within both the City Manager and City Clerk Operating Budgets for 2020. No capital funding nor funding requests will be sought at this time.

b) Minors Heard First at Meetings

Bylaw 18155, Council Procedures Bylaw, reads:

35 (1) Unless otherwise directed by the Chair, speakers will be heard from in the order determined by the City Manager.

Administration's current practice is to list speakers in the order in which they register (i.e. first come, first served) and to make accommodations when necessary. Administration could continue this practice while specifically notifying minors that they can request to speak first. To encourage this, Administration will amend the online Request to Speak form to prompt registrants to indicate whether they are minors, and then move them to the beginning of the speakers list. In accordance with section 35 of the Council Procedures Bylaw, as quoted above, Committee Chairs may direct that any minors who register at the meeting itself be heard first.

At Statutory Public Hearings, the speakers in favour would still be heard before speakers opposed, in accordance with the Council Procedures Bylaw. Within the groups of In Favour and Opposed, minors could be prioritized.

Public Engagement

The August 2019 Edmonton Insight Community Mixed Topic Survey included questions on the possibility of a City Hall child minding service. The survey ran from August 13 to 20. A summary of the survey questions and results are included in Attachment 3. The full results will be available in Open Data on October 1. Highlights from the responses include:

- 28.5% of all 2695 respondents, and 43.3% of the 600 respondents with children in their household, indicated that they believed child care was a barrier to participating in Council and Committee meetings.
- 46.7% of survey respondents supported a free child minding program at City Hall. 31.7% were opposed, and 21.6% were unsure.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work and play			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work and play	Number of users per meeting of the child minding service	TBD	n/a

Attachments

1. Facility Map
2. Site Photos
3. Child Minding in Other Municipalities
4. Insight Community Mixed Topic Survey
5. 2018 Speaker Statistics
6. Risk Assessment

Others Reviewing this Report

- A. Laughlin, Acting Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- J. Meliefste, Acting Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor