

Governance Review of Other Agencies, Boards and Commissions Established by Council - Engagement Results

Board of Revision – Summary of Comments from Members

It's good that the BOR will be part of this overall board/agency review. One thing I would like to suggest be considered during the review is a stronger orientation and training component for new members ensuring that they are clear about their responsibilities, how the various parts of the process work, and what resources they can draw on to learn more about some pretty complex matters they will need to understand.

Over the last while, I have noticed that the Assessment Appeal Process has gotten much more "legalized", drifting slightly off course from its intended administrative tribunal nature. Perhaps this could be looked at during the review as well.

The most important guideline that the Gov & Priorities could consider is to ensure that all participants in the process commit to the spirit of administrative justice and thus not overly legalize the process. Even with all the training, public members cannot be expected to act as judges in a court of law. This is particularly important when residential appeals are heard. The other point will be to ensure that residential appellants are able to access, in "nonlegalese", all the models and assumptions that have gone in arriving at the assessed values of their property. Even for simple things like understanding the difference between assessed values and property taxes, clearer information from the Assessor is key to ensuring that they receive the best possible administrative justice as well as appreciate that the appellate process is not unduly tilted in favour of the Assessor.

One item I hope gets cleared is that of the Assessors and the SMB not adhering to the legislation of "Near to Market Value". There is one instance of injustice that I can relate to and that is the following;

A residence was overcome with soil heaving in the basement of the residence and also in the garage foundation and floor. The estimate as given by an engineering firm was set \$100,000 to bring the value up to market value as compared to other similar residences.

The BOR Panel granted the appeal to the Appellant. The Assessors appealed our decision to the SMB and the SMB reversed our decision and granted the appeal to the city.

Very good suggestion that new board member orientation and training include the “hearing process”, “board member responsibilities”, and “resources available”.

Members have taken issue with what they have described as excessive “legalization” of the hearing process; because it has altered the intended course of an administrative tribunal; and because it handicaps the average residential appellant who has little to less understanding of the assessment tools and processes.

While I don’t disagree with either, I also don’t see a solution. A Board of Revision determines the correctness of an assessment by examining it in the light of relevant legislation and precedent decisions of appellate bodies. Then, in its written decisions, the Board must demonstrate its knowledge of legislation and precedent so as to support those decisions.

As to the process, that too is legislated and must be carefully observed so that all parties are treated equally and fairly. Perhaps some of the concern stems from the too frequent abuse of that process – repeated requests for adjournment over matters that could be resolved with a 10 minute adjournment; prolonged and/or pointless cross examination; introduction and distribution of copies of previous decisions during summation, repeated objections, etc.

From: Smytaniuk, Katherine **On Behalf Of** Bryant, Shellie
Sent: May 12, 2020 11:08 AM
To: Della Marshall
Cc: Bryant, Shellie; [Smytaniuk, Katherine](#)
Subject: Marr Management Board - Meeting Adjustment

Hello Della Marshall:

The Governance Review for Other Bodies Established by Council was tabled at the March 16, 2020 meeting of Governance and Priorities committee [here](#) under item 8.2.1. We are recommending that the Leadership Team Governance Subcommittee review the Marr Residence Management Board (among others) when the report is considered in June. Should Council determine a review is warranted we would address the number of meetings at that time. We would be consulting with the Boards under review.

I understand that Candice Leuschen would have provided Marr Board with a copy of this initial report.

Shellie Bryant | tel 306-975-2880

Deputy City Clerk, City Clerk's Office
City of Saskatoon | 222 3rd Avenue North | Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

www.saskatoon.ca

Connect with us on Twitter and Facebook

*If you receive this email in error, please do not review, distribute or copy the information.
Please contact the sender and delete the message and any attachments.*

From: Della Marshall
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 2:42 PM
To: Smytaniuk, Katherine
Subject:

Katherine

I hope you are keeping healthy and safe during the Covid 19 crisis. We are going to be living in a different world.

With that in mind since over the last two months of not having a Marr Board, has me thinking that this board dose not need to meet every month. I believe that if we meet in September, November, January, March and May we could easily deal with programming, open houses

and any other issues. As you know I have only 1 of 4 member at large positions filled. The other members represent the MVA, City of Saskatoon. (Dean and Cynthia), Nutana community association, Heritage society.

I f the Marr was to put forward a request to reduce our yearly meeting to 5 from the current 10 what would we have to do and can we do it. ???

Many thanks.

Della

Bryant, Shellie

Subject: FW: Comments - Public Report - Governance and Priorities Committee - March 16, 2020 - Governance Review of Other Agencies, Boards and Commissions Established by Council

From: Brockbank, Michael [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 2:57 PM
To: Sackmann, Debby <Debby.Sackmann@Saskatoon.ca>; Brockbank, Michael [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Public Report - Governance and Priorities Committee - March 16, 2020 - Governance Review of Other Agencies, Boards and Commissions Established by Council

Hi Debby, here are a few thoughts that I have regarding the Governance Review.

I feel that it is a worthwhile exercise to analyze the purpose and functions of the four Local Appeal Boards (Property Maintenance Appeals Board, the Fire Appeals Board, the Environmental Management Appeals Board and the Private Swimming Pool Appeals Board) at a reasonable time interval. The membership of five citizens which are appointed for two year terms by Council has remained relatively stable for the past number of years which I feel has increased the effectiveness and cohesiveness of the Board(s). Ian Oliver, the Chair is an effective leader who maintains a balanced hearing process which enables the Appellant sufficient time to present the reasons for their appeal while maintaining a timely and non adversarial hearing. As Vice Chair I have been acting Chair on a few occasions and I have commented that the Chair's role is more challenging than it appears. Ian in my opinion makes it look easy and gives Board members sufficient latitude to ask questions of the Appellant and Fire and Protective Services in order for us to reach an informed decision. I have obtained and reviewed all the applicable bylaws of our Boards including the Cities Act and the Property Maintenance Appeals Board Policy and Policy and Procedures (2018) document which I find useful to have in my possession during hearings, even after 15 years of serving one cannot always quickly recall facts and it's good to have these items at your fingertips. Going forward in the event of Council appointing new members I would recommend the incoming members of these Boards be supplied with the documents automatically and perhaps should attend a short information session on how an actual hearing is conducted which I feel would be helpful to new members. We've had the luxury of having no turnover for quite some time and I feel this is a factor in the relatively smooth manner in which I feel the Boards function. The PMAB consists of the vast majority of our hearings, but I'm not aware of any costs incurred by the continued existence of the other three Boards because of the common membership of the four. Given the increased interest in vacant and derelict properties recently I feel our role is becoming more important than ever. We have had communication with former Assistant Chief Rodgers regarding a standardized procedure for presenting a case which assists the Board greatly in our role. This for the most part has been successful, but is still a work in progress and is aided by the efforts of our Board Secretary. In closing the only other item I would like to comment on is the amount of the honorarium. I'm sure that this is not a factor in our continued service to these Boards; I was not even aware of an honorarium when I initially applied back in 2004. The fact remains that the amount of the honorarium (\$25) has not changed in the 16 years since I started and Ian has told me it hasn't changed since he was appointed to the Boards and he has served longer than I. Thank you for the opportunity to supply some feedback regarding our Boards activity.

Sincerely,

Michael Brockbank, Vice Chair

From: [Beatrice Regnier](#)
To: [Walter, Penny](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Public Report - Governance and Priorities Committee - March 16, 2020 - Governance Review of Other Agencies, Boards and Commissions Established by Council
Date: Friday, June 5, 2020 9:33:21 AM

Penny,

I agree with much of what Chelsea has identified.

I feel there could be more time provided in order to understand the complexities of the items under consideration at the meetings. I am wondering if there could be an opportunity prior to the actual and public portion of the meetings for a general conversation/ brainstorming of the members to better understand the context and issues of the matters under consideration. I understand that there are time constraints for members and staff, but I feel that we could make that part of the meeting optional if anyone feels they have enough information or are restricted for time.

On Thu, Jun 4, 2020 at 2:09 PM Walter, Penny <Penny.Walter@saskatoon.ca> wrote:

Dear Municipal Planning Commission members. I hope everyone is staying well.

Please find attached reporting regarding a governance review of the City's other agencies, boards and commissions which was tabled by the Governance and Priorities Committee at its public meeting held on Monday, March 16, 2020 for consideration at its June 22, 2020 meeting. The report makes a recommendation to conduct a governance review of the Municipal Planning Commission among others.

The report is attached for you to provide any initial feedback. As noted, the report being considered on June 22, 2020 is essentially getting Council approval to begin an in depth review and if passed there will be detailed reporting to follow in the future.

Comments from the Commission would be due to the Leadership Team Governance Subcommittee no later than Monday, June 8, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. to be included in the next round of reporting related to this governance review.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Again, this report will be seeking direction from Council whether they want to review MPC then detailed reporting would follow.

Sincerely,

Penny Walter | tel 306.975.2780

Committee Assistant

City Clerk's Office

City of Saskatoon | 222 3rd Avenue North | Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

penny.walter@saskatoon.ca

www.saskatoon.ca

*If you receive this email in error, please do not review, distribute or copy the information.
Please contact the sender and delete the message and any attachments*

From: [Donna Fracchia](#)
To: [Walter, Penny](#)
Subject: RE: Public Report - Governance and Priorities Committee - March 16, 2020 - Governance Review of Other Agencies, Boards and Commissions Established by Council
Date: Friday, June 5, 2020 9:13:00 AM

Hello,

I would like to comment on the MPC role also. Right now the MPC has little input on the overall traffic or road planning that directly impacts the communities we are discussing. I find this very frustrating when trying to make a positive difference in the city and it's subdivisions and yet have very little ability to impact the traffic flow in the communities we are looking at.

I attended one conference and felt that the city had the potential to look at other areas (such as improving lighting; making Saskatoon a more eco friendly city, etc) to improve the quality of life of residents in Saskatoon however, it was not in our MPC mandate I found out upon returning to the city and bringing it up at the MPC.

Donna Fracchia

From: Walter, Penny <Penny.Walter@Saskatoon.ca>

Sent: June 4, 2020 2:10 PM

[REDACTED]

Subject: Public Report - Governance and Priorities Committee - March 16, 2020 - Governance Review of Other Agencies, Boards and Commissions Established by Council

Dear Municipal Planning Commission members. I hope everyone is staying well.

Please find attached reporting regarding a governance review of the City's other agencies, boards and commissions which was tabled by the Governance and Priorities Committee at its public meeting held on Monday, March 16, 2020 for consideration at its June 22, 2020 meeting. The report makes a recommendation to conduct a governance review of the Municipal Planning Commission among others.

The report is attached for you to provide any initial feedback. As noted, the report being considered on June 22, 2020 is essentially getting Council approval to begin an in depth review and if passed there will be detailed reporting to follow in the future.

Comments from the Commission would be due to the Leadership Team Governance Subcommittee no later than Monday, June 8, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. to be included in the next round of reporting related to this governance review.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Again, this report will be seeking direction from Council whether they want to review MPC then detailed reporting would

follow.

Sincerely,

Penny Walter | tel 306.975.2780

Committee Assistant

City Clerk's Office

City of Saskatoon | 222 3rd Avenue North | Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

penny.walter@saskatoon.ca

www.saskatoon.ca

*If you receive this email in error, please do not review, distribute or copy the information.
Please contact the sender and delete the message and any attachments*

Bryant, Shellie

Subject: FW: Public Report - Governance and Priorities Committee - March 16, 2020 - Governance Review of Other Agencies, Boards and Commissions Established by Council

From: Chelsea Parent [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 2:56 PM
To: Walter, Penny <Penny.Walter@Saskatoon.ca>
Cc: Alexis Bourassa [REDACTED]; Beatrice Regnier [REDACTED]; Diane Bentley [REDACTED]; Donna Fracchia [REDACTED]; Greg White [REDACTED]; Jenn Penny [REDACTED]; Keira Sawatzky [REDACTED]; Loewen, Mairin (City Councillor) <Mairin.Loewen@Saskatoon.ca>; Naveed Anwar [REDACTED]; Rivard, Francois [REDACTED]; Robin Mowat [REDACTED]; Stan Laba [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Public Report - Governance and Priorities Committee - March 16, 2020 - Governance Review of Other Agencies, Boards and Commissions Established by Council

Hi Penny,

Thanks for your email and I hope it is alright I am cc'ing all on this. From what I read quickly, the MPC may be reviewed in order to determine if it is effective in its mandate and how to improve in the future? I welcome this governance review as I personally think that the MPC could be much more effective as a more active committee - much like the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee and like the Vancouver MPC (see below).

I have a few thoughts on how the MPC could operate to be a more of an "active" committee - in terms of taking on year-long or multi-year projects in more focused areas that are of priority for the city. If you take a look at how Vancouver's MPC operates, they take this approach. Information for other committee members here: <http://vancouverplanning.ca/>

For example, they carry out their mandate through select special projects and providing comment on specific items on council's agenda. I believe that we could be more effective in our work by taking a few important projects to comment on where we can have time to review material together and come up with collective or several strong pieces of input that we could provide. For example, I know that myself and other MPC members felt that we needed more background on the airbnb issue and it would have been more beneficial if we could have worked through the information together to better understand, thus provide better input.

I personally would be very interested in us using our MPC funds towards special projects instead of individuals going to conferences. I see this as a more effective use of those funds as it could have direct benefit to the community. I suppose now with COVID, we may not be going to any conferences this year and it could be an opportunity for our group to come up with one or two community projects and implementing as a pilot project? At the beginning of the year, we could brainstorm projects that are novel/occurring in other cities or support current planning initiatives in the city. An example would be partnering with a local business (we could put out a call) to pilot project a "Parklet" (example here: <https://vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/parklets.aspx>). I am interested to hear what others think about this as well.

With this approach, it would be important for us to provide reports to council/administration on the progress/success of our project (not long or ridiculous, just some simple information to show to council/our community what we achieve and where we are going moving forward). I also think that we as commission members need opportunities to provide feedback on our experience and how it can be improved - so maybe this would mean that we have a workshop at the beginning of the year for members to have a Q&A with city planners on the zoning bylaw or provincial legislation related to planning matters. We can strengthen our

knowledge and skills in order to provide more informed feedback to council on things that we address in our meetings.

I also think that we need a stronger "on-boarding" for new members. Personally, I was very lost for quite a while and was not sure what my role was for several months. Also, the general committee information session tended to be vague on the overlap with "commissions" - are committees and commissions the same? How is our input used by council? What kinds of information is administration and council looking for from our group? These were some of the questions I had when I started, and found out through participating but I think that we could have better retention and general feelings of community with our group if we had a strong on-boarding for new members.

I believe these suggestions would help to achieve the goal of "to improve, modernize and reform the structure and function of these agencies, boards and commissions", as noted in the attached documents.

I welcome feedback on these ideas and thank you Penny for the opportunity to provide some comments.

Penny, if this is not exactly what you are looking for, I apologize but I was meaning to put these comments to the group at some point this year and have now found a moment/space to share them.