

February 15, 2022

Secretary, Governance and Priorities Committee

Dear Secretary:

**Re: Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee – Feedback - Governance Review –
Advisory Committees – Review of Terms of Reference (CK 225-1 x 255-2)**

The Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee, at its meeting held on February 2, 2022, reviewed the tabled report of the Leadership Team Governance Subcommittee, to be considered by the Governance and Priorities Committee, and resolved:

That the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee provide feedback, based on the Committee's discussion on the matter, to the Governance and Priority Committee for its February 22, 2022 meeting for consideration.

During discussion, Committee members pursued some questions that arose from the report of the Leadership Team Governance Subcommittee. One that is of general interest to all committees of Council is the ruling that the Chair must be physically present at meetings. In our discussion, the Committee wondered if it may make more sense to allow virtual participation to be an option for Chairs, should their physical presence be impossible. We feel that given our experiences over the past two years with virtual meetings, people are well acclimatized to meeting in this way. Allowing the Chair to attend virtually will mean fewer delays if the Chair cannot attend physically on a specific date, and may even open up Chairmanship to a broader audience, if someone is dealing with issues of mobility.

In terms of matters dealing more directly with MHAC, we have found that although our liaisons provide us with good communication, the Committee is still not always hearing about heritage matters that are presented to the City in a timely fashion. It is our hope that a structure can be put in place to allow MHAC ongoing involvement early in the process of any heritage matter. We would like to be flexible and responsive in the assistance we provide to City Council in heritage matters and would like to hold special meetings when significant heritage issues arise. We understand that in some cases these matters can be fast moving, however would still like to be given the opportunity to advise Council as our mandate suggests.

It is worth noting that MHAC currently has a number of ongoing issues under discussion and being integrated into our Work Plan including, but not limited to: Elder consultation; a review of the Heritage Policies and Plan; working with Administration on securing additional funding for the Heritage Conservation Program; continuing to look at designation for the North East Swale; the Bessborough Hotel Heritage Designation; Intangible Heritage; Heritage conservation districts; and researching what other cities are doing in the heritage conservation realm. Obtaining information and moving forward on these areas of focus can sometimes be a lengthy process, for two reasons. First, the Committee finds the reporting structure somewhat difficult to navigate at times. For example, the Committee has to submit

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a letter to a specific Standing Policy Committee and wait for that Committee to meet in order to provide comment and requests. Some form of ad hoc communication, perhaps under the oversight of Administration, may prove more efficient and effective.

The second difficulty in providing strong advice and moving forward effectively in our work is a lack of access to subject-specific experts. Our group has discussed that having easier access to experts in the city, province, and beyond, be they individuals or organizations, would allow us to provide City Council with better, more well researched information. For example, it may be beneficial to have Advisory Committees meet with each other on subjects of shared purpose. As another example, seeking experts from a city that has a highly successful heritage conservation program to come and speak to the committee may also prove beneficial, as would seeking a broader range of devoted heritage experts when appointing new members.

Ultimately, we hope to pursue these things as a means of more effectively serving City Council as an Advisory Committee. By having MHAC involved early on in any heritage matter, the Committee will be allowed time to fully tap the breadth of expertise of its members. Improving communication with Council and its committees plays a role in making sure we can work efficiently for Council, as does having the latitude to reach out to other experts as needed. These things together will allow MHAC provide well rounded and thoroughly researched advice to the City on heritage matters in a more effective and efficient way.

The Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee respectfully requests that the recommendation be considered.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lenore Swystun". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lenore Swystun, Chair
Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee

LS:ht