

The Corporation of **THE CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER**
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

REPORT

To: Mayor Darrell R. Mussatto and Members of Council

From: G.C. Penway, Deputy Director

SUBJECT: PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF SELECTED CIVIC ADVISORY BODIES

Date: February 14, 2011 File No: 0360-01

The following is a suggested recommendation only. Please refer to Council Minutes for adopted resolution.

RECOMMENDATION:

PURSUANT to the report of the Deputy Director, dated February 14, 2011, entitled "Proposed Reorganization of Civic Advisory Body":

THAT as per Option 1 of said report, the proposed reorganization of selected advisory bodies be referred to the relevant advisory bodies for comment and that, subsequently, a Public Workshop be held to consider the restructuring of civic advisory bodies as proposed with advisory bodies also being invited to participate in that event.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. List of Public Appointed Advisory Bodies
2. Annotated List of Selected Advisory Bodies (showing their evolution over time)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to propose a review of six of the City's civic advisory bodies, as suggested in the current Official Community Plan.

The intention would be to more closely align our advisory bodies with the Vision and Goals of the Official Community Plan. It is expected that changes would result in advisory bodies that more fully address the Vision and Goals of the OCP, increase the relevancy of our advisory bodies and create efficiencies. This would also bring related subject matters together to achieve synergies and balance.

ADVISORY BODY BACKGROUND

The City has a variety of advisory bodies with public members that provide input to Council, staff, applicants and others, as listed in Attachment # 1. This list only includes committees with general public membership. Some of these groups help the City implement civic programs. They all play an important role in bringing the community directly into Council's decision-making process and local government in general.

Participation on advisory bodies is not a superficial form of community engagement. Members of the public commit to terms of 2 to 3 years, often serving 6 years. An incredible amount of volunteer time is therefore donated to the City through public participation on these groups. It is estimated that for the Advisory Planning Commission, Parks & Environment Committee, Advisory Design Panel, Social Planning Advisory Committee and Heritage Advisory Commission alone, in excess of 1200 hours of volunteer time is spent providing input to the City annually. This does not include time spent by members on their own reading agenda materials, visiting sites, holding sub meetings, doing other research, etc.

This commitment allows members to become very informed about issues and policies, greatly strengthening the value of their contribution. The advisory bodies therefore serve as a vehicle for residents and business people to learn more about both local issues and local government. This often leads to advisory body members sitting on other advisory bodies when their terms are up and some even then run for Council. In these ways, both the advisory body volunteers and the City benefit.

Given the commitment that members of the public are making to the community through their membership on advisory bodies, it is important for the City to consider how to make that input as valuable as possible. This report suggests that this could be enhanced for the benefit of members and the City.

A few advisory bodies are provided for through legislation. Most, however, have been created as "ad hoc" groups to assist Council without specific authority. Usually this has been in response to a specific interest or concern. It is important to understand that there are clear distinctions between advisory committees and other types of Boards, Commissions or Task Forces. These can be summarized as follows:

- "Committee"**: has an ongoing mandate that will continue until Council changes or repeals it. These are usually purely advisory in nature.
- "Task Force"**: has a specific task to perform and a timeline to complete it in. Once complete, the Task Force automatically dissolves.

“Board”: this term is usually reserved for groups that perform legislatively delegated duties. Examples of this are the Board of Variance and Library Board. Once created, they act with relative autonomy.

“Commission”: usually has a legislatively authorized mandate and functions with relative autonomy, sometimes as a distinct entity. For example the North Vancouver Recreation Commission and Museum & Archives Commission have their own mandate and even employees. On the other hand, the Advisory Planning Commission and Heritage Advisory Commission function in an advisory capacity, like a committee, but are called commissions based on Provincial legislation.

This report only considers a selected group of advisory bodies that function in an advisory role, not other Boards or Commissions.

Another aspect of advisory bodies to consider is which department provides support to them. This is usually the department that most directly relates to their area of interest.

While it easy to think of advisory bodies as being constant, in fact, they have changed significantly over the years. Attachment #2 shows how the advisory bodies under consideration have evolved over time. The longest serving advisory body is the Advisory Planning Commission. It was created in 1926 when Zoning was first introduced under new Provincial legislation. It originally had significant powers through the Municipal Act but has since evolved to be an advisory body. Changes to its mandate occurred in 1957, 1978, 1990 and 2005.

The Advisory Design Panel was created in 1970, originally as a sub group of the Advisory Planning Commission. It's mandate was changed in 1975, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1989, and 1997.

A Heritage Advisory Committee existed from 1979 to 1981 then from 1987 to 1994. At that time, it was transformed into a Commission as per new Provincial legislation.

An Environmental Protection Program Committee was established to help guide the development of the Environmental Protection Program (EPP) from 1997 to 2000. Once the EPP was adopted, the committee then evolved into the Environmental Protection Advisory Committee (EPAC) in 2001. A Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee was established in 2002, and in 2004 merged with the EPAC to form the existing Parks & Environment Advisory Committee.

Today, the advisory bodies serving the City represent a collection of groups that have been created over the past 80 years, usually in response to specific issues. As a result, their mandates tend to be rather narrow and are somewhat disconnected from one another.

When the Local Agenda 21 Committee reported in 1999, the concept of an integrated approach to sustainability was introduced. In 2002, this approach was enshrined in the OCP along with a recommendation (section 14.2.2) that the organizational structure of the City, including advisory bodies, be reassessed to reflect this new approach. A 2010 Sustainability Review completed independently by the Fraser Basin Council, suggested creating more opportunities for cross pollination among City advisory committees and advisory committee support for economic considerations. Given these influences and having observed these groups over many years, staff is recommending that a fresh approach to civic advisory bodies be considered.

Under our current advisory body structure, some issues get intense and regular public scrutiny through an advisory body, plus staff analysis for the subject. At the same time, others issues get no regular public input or scrutiny since there is no advisory body related to the subject.

A MODIFIED APPROACH

In this report, staff is suggesting a new approach to setting up advisory bodies. This is not to say that our existing committees have not been effective. Rather it is a suggestion that they could be re-energized and more purposefully focussed to become more effective and efficient.

There are several ways to approach a reorganization of our advisory bodies. The following three approaches are provided for Council's consideration:

Option I Revised Committees (Recommended):

In this option, three new advisory bodies and one task force would be created to replace six existing groups.

Sustainable Planning Commission (SPC). The Advisory Planning Commission would be revamped to more explicitly include environmental and economic development considerations. This group would then combine land use, social issues, the environment and economic development issues. It would function much like it does now, but with a stronger emphasis on these added areas.

Originally the Environment Program was primarily focussed on streamside protection for fish habitat. More recently, climate change has emerged as a larger issue. The City's response to environmental issues is much more an urban response than a parks concern. It makes much more sense for our environmental emphasis to be on urban issues such as building standards, complete community (land uses & densities), energy, storm water management, etc. Currently, no City advisory body has responsibility for economic development. The APC or outside agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce are used to some extent for this input.

A Terms of reference would be created for this group. Membership on the Sustainable Planning Commission would be expanded and positions would be reserved for

individuals with social ,environmental, economic development expertise as well as general members. This Commission would oversee the delivery of the new Sustainable City Award to be launched in 2011.

Sense of Place Committee: Sense of Place is an important new Chapter of the OCP. As a new subject it needs to be better defined and be allowed to evolve. Sense of Place is intended to capture what is special, distinct or unique about the City. What defines us? All great places have a distinct sense of place, whether planned, historic or accidental.

Civic initiatives such as heritage and public art are part of this. But there is much more. Sense of Place is largely defined by our streetscapes and public parks and open spaces. Streetscape character, landmarks and gateways also contribute. Natural features such as the waterfront, streams and vistas are also important.

It is suggested that a new Sense of Place Committee be formed. It would combine the efforts of the existing Heritage Advisory Commission and Parks Advisory Committee. The Joint CNV/DNV Public Art Committee would have a representative. The SPC would also add streetscapes, landmarks and gateways, which currently do not get the benefit of any dedicated advisory body input.

Bringing these interests together may result in a different approach to defining heritage. It might help provide direction for a public art program. It might help create more defined and recognizable streetscape designs. With a common notion of what we are working towards, all of these efforts could contribute to a better City with a more recognizable sense of place.

A new Terms of Reference for this group would be created with specific positions for members with Parks, Heritage, Public Art and Design expertise as well as general public representation. Sub committees might be formed to address specific projects as necessary. Award programs would reconsidered and handled by this group as deemed appropriate. This could result in either the continuation of awards or new awards.

Given the workload of the Advisory Design Panel and need for building reviews, it is not proposed to modify the ADP. It is expected that the ADP and new SPC would meet together or collaborate from time to time.

Sustainable Transportation Committee: Until recently, the City has had a Joint Bicycle Advisory Committee (JBAC) with the District of North Vancouver. Other transportation issues have been assigned to the APC. Recently, the District of North Vancouver has announced that it will no longer participate on JBAC. This leaves the future of that group in question.

The APC has been used very little to consider transportation issues. While linking Transportation and Land Use on the APC makes a lot of sense, staff are of the opinion that there is an array of detailed transportation issues that require attention. Probably more attention than could be provided on the new SPC.

It is therefore being recommended that a new Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) be created. It would focus on all aspects of transportation including walking, cycling, transit, goods movement and vehicles. The City has never had such a committee. While we have had detailed input on cycling through JBAC, we have virtually no concerted input on walking, or transit which are much more common modes. As we move to becoming a more sustainable community we require a significant increase in active transportation and transit. This group could help us achieve that.

A new Terms of Reference would be prepared for this group that would include individuals with an interest in walking, cycling, transit and goods movement.

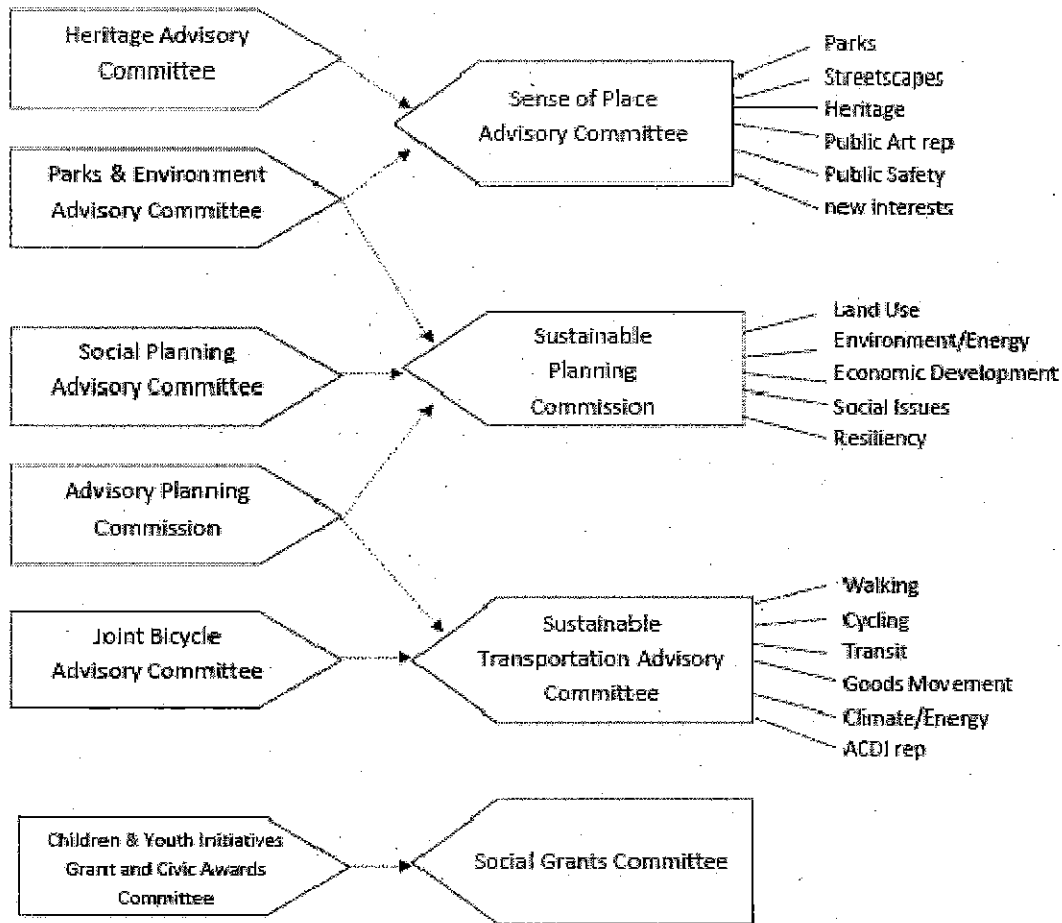
The report of the Assistant City Engineer Transportation on the future role of the JBAC is included in tonight's Council agenda package for discussion and recommends expending the role of this committee as proposed in this Option. JBAC would carry on as a City only body until such time as the new Sustainable Transportation Committee is created.

Summary

Collectively, Option 1 changes are shown graphically below:

OLD

NEW



Social Grant Committee: The Social Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC) would have its policy functions transferred to the Sustainable Planning Commission. A new Social Grants Committee would facilitate the issuance of grants. It would meet as required for grant considerations. Membership might include representatives from other advisory bodies, such as the SPC. This group could also take on responsibility for the Children & Youth Grant and Youth Awards Committee. This would consolidate grants in a manner that could be more efficient and consistent.

The Advisory Design Panel is not changed in this proposal since they have a very heavy workload already and site specific reviews are worthwhile. It is proposed that they would communicate with the Sense of Place Committee and Sustainability Planning Commission and meet together once per year.

These suggestions would be taken to the Workshop and refined or expanded as necessary depending upon the response. They would be presented as a starting point for purposes of discussion. Staff would then report back for direction.

Option 2 General Workshop: Another, less specific approach would be to conduct a workshop with no specific proposals for consideration. It would simply be an open discussion about possible reorganization and see what ideas evolve. This might lead to another effective outcome.

Option3: Receive and File. If Council is satisfied with the existing advisory body structure, then this report should be received and filed.

SUSTAINABILITY COMMENTS:

Sustainability is at the foundation of the Official Community Plan. The OCP 2021 & Beyond will build upon the very significant commitment to sustainability reflected in the 2002 OCP by help integrating sustainability into the City's operations and the community as a whole. A community engagement program focussed on sustainability could take our efforts in this regard to a new level.

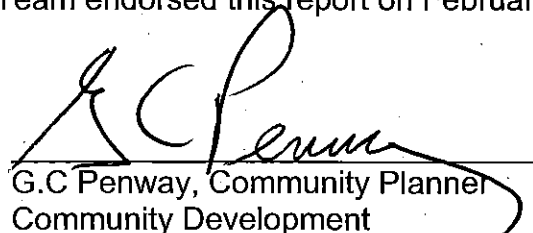
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There is a notable cost to supporting advisory bodies. This includes direct costs for food, child care, etc. There is also staff time involved which is significant. It is therefore prudent to ensure that the City is getting best value for these expenses. Although not a driving force in bringing this report forward, it is anticipated that a change could result in a reduction in cost since there would be fewer advisory bodies. This would be considered in more detail in a future report. The recommended Workshop itself would be done in-house at minimal costs.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Civic Projects Team and Directors Team endorsed this report on February 8, 2011.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:


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Community Development

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