



The Corporation of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie

Staff Report

Council Meeting Date: November 13, 2023

Subject: SRCLK.2023.13 – Accessibility and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committees

Report from: Christine Fraser-McDonald, Clerk

Appendices: None

Recommendation

Be It Resolved that Council hereby,

1. Directs staff to prepare a Terms of Reference for an Accessibility Advisory Committee;
2. Directs staff to prepare a Terms of Reference for an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee;
3. Appoint the members of Council that will support the Accessibility and EDI Committees;
4. Directs staff to prepare advertisements for applications for the above noted committees for public participants; and,
5. That Resolution # 337-28-2022 be amended to reflect the changes in the disbandment of the Safe Communities Committee as well as the Teeswater Bridge Project Working Group.

Report Summary

This report will explore the proposals for an Accessibility Advisory Committee as well as an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee.

Background

On August 14, 2023, Council passed the following resolution regarding a Notice of Motion presented by Deputy Mayor Shaw:

Whereas Ontario communities have seen dramatic increases in hate-motivated incidents and hate crimes against 2S-LGBTQQIAP+, Jewish, Muslim, Black, Asian, Indigenous and other equity-seeking individuals;

Whereas there were more than 1,500 police reported hate Crimes in Ontario in 2021; Whereas everyone is guaranteed equality rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is embedded in Canada's constitution;

Whereas the Province of Ontario in May, 2023, recognizing the increase in hate crimes and has released a \$25.5 million dollar investment with the new Anti-hate Security and Prevention Grant program as part of Ontario Strengthening Supports to Combat Hate and Create Safer Communities;

Whereas locally, the 2S-LGBTQQIAP+ community and allies are being directly threatened by a hate mail campaign and events inciting discrimination against these community members;

Whereas the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie and its citizens embrace and celebrate diversity, equity and inclusion in our local community;

Whereas the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie recognizes our responsibility to meaningfully respond to the impacts of hate in our community;

And Whereas hate speech and related activities have no place in an inclusive society;

Therefore, be it resolved:

1. That the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie reaffirms our commitment to a safe and inclusive community and condemns hate in all its forms;
2. Directs staff to explore the creation of an inclusion and accessibility committee that will examine the barriers, identify opportunities, and propose anti-hate policies and procedures that ensure safe and welcoming spaces for everyone in our community; and
3. That a copy of this motion be provided to Bruce County Municipalities.

Analysis

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was created to develop, implement and enforce standards for accessibility related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation and buildings. The target date for reaching this goal is no later than January 1, 2025.

The AODA's regulations establish accessibility standards. An accessibility standard applies only to a person or organization that does at least one of the following activities:

- provides goods, services or facilities
- employs people in Ontario
- offers accommodation
- owns or occupies a building, a structure or a premises
- plays a part in a business or other activity that the regulations may identify.

Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees

As per the AODA, the Council of every municipality with 10,000 people or more must establish an accessibility advisory committee. If the municipality had a similar committee before the AODA became the law, that committee should continue. Municipalities with less than 10,000 people may either establish an accessibility advisory committee or continue a similar committee that existed before the AODA became the law. Two or more municipalities may decide to set up a joint committee, instead of each one having its own.

The majority of the municipal accessibility advisory committee members must be people with disabilities. The committees give advice to the municipal council to help it carry out its responsibilities under the AODA.

Council must consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee:

- when establishing, reviewing and updating the Municipality's Multiyear Accessibility Plan, accessibility standards and annual public status update;
- on accessibility for people with disabilities on buildings that the Municipality:
 - constructs;
 - purchases;
 - significantly renovates;
 - leases or declares a municipal capital facility;
 - on the need, location and design of accessible on-street parking spaces;
- before building new or making major changes to existing recreational trails to help determine particular trail features;
- on the needs of children and caregivers with various disabilities in the municipality when building new or making major changes to existing outdoor play spaces;
- on the design and placement of rest areas along the exterior path of travel when building new or making major changes to existing exterior paths of travel.
- Council must provide site plans and drawings from developers to the Accessibility Advisory Committee in a timely manner, when requested.
- Site plans may include subdivisions, municipal offices, community centres or recreation centres.

Council will need to determine the structure and size of the committee as well as a schedule of meetings. The creation of a Terms of Reference will include all the necessary information for the committee. This committee should include citizen appointees.

For additional information, the County of Grey has a joint accessibility committee with its townships. At this time, there are six member townships. The Township of Chatsworth has elected to not join this committee since it has a population of less than 10,000 and therefore does not require a committee. In writing this report, the Clerk has reached out the Clerk of Bruce County in this regard. The County Clerk has replied that Bruce County is not looking at this type of committee structure at this time.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory

Arran-Elderslie Council has also requested staff to investigate an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee.

The overall goal of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee is to provide guidance to staff and Council in the development of policies, initiatives and programs aimed at reducing barriers in the workplace at the Municipality and fostering diversity and inclusion in all areas of the organization, both internal and external.

Once again, Council will need to determine the structure and size of the committee as well as a schedule of meetings. The creation of a Terms of Reference will include all the necessary information for the committee. This committee should also include citizen appointees.

All committees follow the rules of procedure as outlined in the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie Procedural By-law. Further, all committee members would be subject to the Code of Conduct for the Municipality.

Committees of Council

At this time, the following members of Council have been appointed to the following advisory committees, groups and boards for the 2022-2026 Term of Council by a motion passed on November 28, 2022:

- Grey Sauble Conservation Authority - **Deputy Mayor Shaw**
- Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority - **Councillor Penner**
- Chesley and Area Joint Fire Board - **Councillor Hampton, Councillor Dudgeon**
- Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit - **Deputy Mayor Shaw**
- Bruce Area Solid Waste Recycling - **Councillor Nickason**
- Multi-Municipal Wind Turbine Working Group - **Councillor Dudgeon, Councillor Nickason**
- Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee - **Councillor Hampton, Councillor Penner**
- Paisley Firehall Subcommittee - **Councillor Penner, Mayor Hammell, Deputy Mayor Shaw**

- o Paisley Teeswater Bridge Project Working Group - **Councillor Penner, Deputy Mayor Shaw**

Subsequent to this motion, Councillor Steinacker was appointed to the Safe Communities Committee.

Since this time, the Safe Communities Committee has disbanded as well as the Teeswater Bridge Project Working Group.

The Paisley Fire Hall Subcommittee has now become dormant since its mandate has been met at this time.

Staff is recommending that this motion be amended and updated to reflect Councillor's appointments.

Link to Strategic/Master Plan

6.5 Engaging People and Partnerships

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding/Link to Procurement Policy

The financial impacts will need to be determined if Council decides to create two new advisory committees for Accessibility and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Costs will depend on the number of committee members, number of meetings scheduled etc.

Approved by: Sylvia Kirkwood, Chief Administrative Officer