Heritage Guelph

Heritage Committee Facilitation Summary and Best Practice Review

June 2021

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"Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people."

Steve Jobs, Co-founder of Apple

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Executive Summary: Heritage Guelph

The City of Guelph (the "city") is a single tier municipality with a population of 131,794 (2016 Canada Census). City Council consists of a Mayor and two (2) Councillors for each of its six (6) wards for a total of thirteen (13) members. We understand that a Council composition and ward boundary review is underway. Council's mandate is supported in part through twenty-nine (29) boards and committees. Twenty-nine is a relatively high number of boards and committees, though a few may not be very active due to their limited mandates. One active committee is Heritage Guelph; a volunteer committee consisting of nine (9) positions.

The city established Heritage Guelph (formerly known as Guelph Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee or LACAC) as an advisory committee to Council in 1977. Heritage Guelph ("HG") is established pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act* (the "Act"), as amended. In June 2017, the city amended the terms of reference (TOR) for HG. The previous update occurred in the 1990's. The purpose of the new terms of reference was to ensure alignment with the city's Official Plan and Procedural By-law as well as the amended *Act*.

The *Act* allows for a Council to establish a heritage committee to advise and assist them on matters relating to Part IV, Part V and other heritage matters as the council may specify by by-law (s. 28 (1)). The city's Official Plan and TOR further articulate the composition, purpose, responsibilities and mandate of HG.

Executive Summary: Scope of Work

Concerns over a strained relationship between HG and the city staff have arisen. Though reportedly not an isolated matter, one catalyst that placed a spotlight on these tensions was the recent approval of the city's Cultural Heritage Action Plan (CHAP). HG raised concerns regarding the CHAP as well as how their advice was communicated to Council. Recognizing the importance of ensuring stable and collaborative relations between HG and staff, Council directed staff to procure the services of a facilitator. In March 2021, the city issued a Scope of Work to acquire quotations for facilitation services. The Scope of Work identified a need to "focus on identifying issues and facilitating discussions which result in agreed upon resolutions and overall improvement of the staff/committee relationship".

Municipal Government Wayfinders Ltd. (MGW) responded to the request for quotations and was the successful bidder. Michael Wildman, the principal consultant at MGW, a Registered Professional Planner (RPP) and a graduate of the Professional Facilitators Program (PFP) was identified as the lead facilitator.

Executive Summary: Scope of Work

MGW's work plan included a series of key steps, including:

Step 1: Conduct individual interviews with the Chair of HG, as well as the General Manager of the Planning and Building Services Department. The purpose was to gain a broader understanding of the issues prior to developing facilitated workshop content. To supplement these interviews, the Vice-Chair of the committee and the Manager, Policy, Planning & Urban Design were added for additional consultation.

Step 2: Develop a series of focus group questions incorporating SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results) interview methodologies. A virtual flip chart exercise was also developed to further refine the issues.

Step 3: Two facilitated consensus workshops were held to identify current, emerging, and future challenges and opportunities. Each workshop included invitations to a balanced number of city staff and HG members. As a result of COVID-19, both workshops were conducted using an online meeting platform. A live polling system was also used to solicit participant feedback and assist in ranking responses.

Executive Summary: Scope of Work

Step 4: Following the facilitated sessions, workshop feedback was synthesized into this "What we Heard" document.

Step 5: An online meeting with all workshop participants was planned to present a summary and findings of the "What we Heard" document. That meeting is currently planned for July 2021.

In addition to steps 1 through 5, an optional step 6 was proposed and accepted:

Step 6: Complete best practice interviews with two (2) municipal comparators. The purpose of step 6 is to identify lessons learned and best practices that have been successfully implemented to strengthen relationships and communication. A third municipality was also interviewed. This summary should be read together with our best practice summary that follows.

Executive Summary:
Top Ranked Opportunities

A carefully planned facilitation strategy was developed. The approach was to commence with high-level questions followed by facilitated discussions, to zero in on issues and opportunities. As detailed in step 3 of the scope of work, a live polling system was also used to solicit participant feedback in real-time. As the groups self-identified issues and opportunities, the live polling system was leveraged to assist with ranking responses. Participants were asked to rank feedback generated by the group during the virtual flip chart activities.

Two separately held facilitated sessions yielded several "opportunities for improvement". The top ranked responses have been rolled up into the following eight (8) high-level groupings of opportunities:

- A desire for improved communication between HG and city staff

- A desire for enhanced collaboration for things such as the development of heritage work plans

- A desire for inclusion of a Council member on HG

Executive Summary:
Top Ranked Opportunities

- A desire for clearer communication of HG's recommendations to Council

- A desire for enhanced opportunities to promote heritage conservation

- A desire for additional staff and financial resources

- A desire for enhanced training opportunities for HG members

- A desire for more flexibility and less formality

The eight (8) high-level groupings of opportunities have been further refined into twenty-seven (27) "opportunities for improvement" in the workshop common themes section of this summary. The common themes identify issues while the accompanying "opportunities for improvement" offer strategies, suggested by participants, to respond to the common theme issues.

Interviews

Preliminary Consultations

Preliminary Consultations

Preliminary interviews were conducted individually with the Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as the General Manager, Planning & Building Services and the Manager, Policy, Planning & Urban Design. The purpose of these interviews was to gain a broader understanding of the issues prior to developing workshop content.

All interviews were treated as confidential. It was evident from those interviewed that the relationship between HG and city staff is indeed strained. It was clear that the relationship was lacking trust and that lack of trust is impacting how HG delivers its mandate as well as how HG members and staff function. However, there appeared to be a desire to find ways to help improve the relationship. To that end, the information collected during the preliminary interviews was very helpful in informing the development of the facilitation strategy.

Facilitation Summary

Groups 1 and 2 Workshops

Facilitated Workshop Groups

Two (2) facilitated workshops were conducted. All members of HG were invited and most attended. The following city staff also attended:

Manager, Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk

Manager, Policy, Planning & Urban Design

General Manager, Planning & Building Services

Board and Committee Coordinator

Senior Heritage Planner

Each workshop included invitations to a balanced number of HG members and staff. Workshops were scheduled based on availability of most participants. We were mindful to ensure that a quorum of committee members was not present at either workshop. Two workshops also provided an opportunity to validate common themes that emerged separately across both groups.

Facilitated Workshop Questions

Both workshop groups were asked four open ended **SOAR** (**S**trengths, **O**pportunities, **A**spirations and (desired) **R**esults) questions to generate discussion. When conducting a SOAR analysis, the basic questions to be answered are:

What are our greatest **strengths**?

What are our best **opportunities**?

What is our preferred future? (**aspirations**)

What are the measurable **results** that will tell us we have achieved our vision of the future?

More specifically, SOAR methodologies seek responses to the following questions:

S = Strengths: What is an organization or group doing well, including its assets, people, capabilities, and greatest accomplishments?

O = Opportunities: What are the circumstances that could improve outputs, unmet needs; what threats or weakness can be reframed into possibilities?

Facilitated Workshop Questions

A = Aspirations: What can the organization or group be; what does the organization or group desire to be known for?

R = Results: What are the tangible, measurable items that will indicate when the goals and aspirations have been achieved? Put another way, how will we know we are succeeding?

Each participant responded to all questions individually through a live polling portal. Participants were able to view all feedback received in real-time. A facilitated group discussion occurred after all responses were collected.

The SOAR questions generated discussion, which helped bring clarity to the closing virtual flip chart discussion. The virtual flip chart discussion asked three (3) critical questions. Each participant responded to the flip chart question individually, through the live polling portal. Participants were able to view all feedback received. Participants were then asked to rank the responses collected in real-time, thus establishing a consensus of priority rankings amongst participants. A facilitated group discussion occurred after all responses were ranked to ensure responses were understood.

The virtual flip chart questions were as follows:

Facilitated Workshop Questions

Question 1:

Thinking about Heritage Guelph and the city as a group that is intended to work together, where does it face its biggest challenges today?

Question 2:

Thinking about Heritage Guelph and the city as group that is intended to work together, where will it face its biggest challenges in the future?

Question 3:

As a group that is intended to work together, how can we position or organize ourselves to respond? (Are we trying to do too much? Are we under resourced? Are we underfunded? Do we need process improvements? Are we organized for the best outcomes? What changes would you make?)
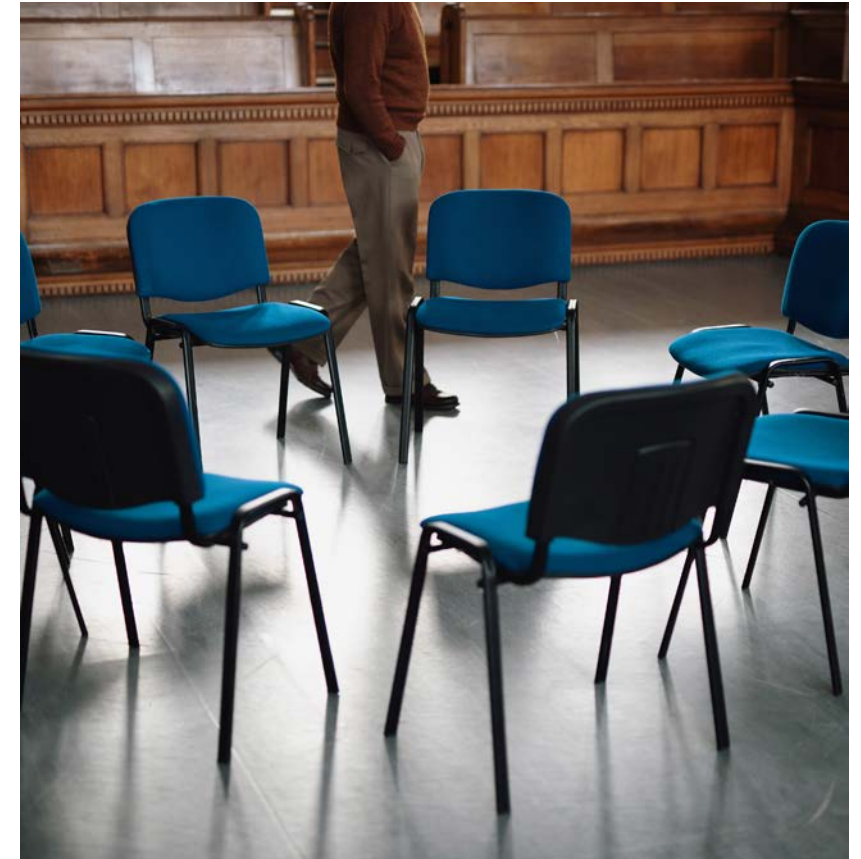
Workshop Common Themes

A synthesis of participant feedback

Workshop: Common Themes

Summary

Our summary is not a verbatim account of every comment put forward. It is a synthesis of the common themes, ideas, issues, concerns and opportunities generated during the interviews and workshops. The intent of this summary is to help inform decision making and provide useful information that could be leveraged now and, in the future, as solutions to improve relations.

Commonalities

While the participants expressed a variety of different points of view, it was evident as discussions evolved that many participants were aligned on the actual issues, concerns and opportunities. Holding two workshops served to further validate common themes.

While there were varied participants, common themes emerged in each of the two separate focus groups. The feedback provided was raised during consultations to varying degrees and are therefore common but not necessarily the universal opinions of all participants.

Workshop: Common Themes

The information contained in the themes listed below should be viewed as opinions of the workgroup participants. They may not always be wholly accurate and are not necessarily the opinion of the author of this summary. However, they nevertheless provide valuable insight into issues, opportunities and potential solutions.

Feedback was consolidated into six (6) Common Themes. They include summarized feedback collected related for each theme. Common themes are accompanied by "Opportunities for Improvement" based on feedback received that is in keeping with the high-level opportunities list in the Executive Summary. "Opportunities for Improvement" offer potential solutions to strengthen relationships.

The following is a listing of the six (6) common themes:

- Communication (and Trust)

Workshop: Common Themes

- Resources

- Collaboration

- Outreach

- Training

- Flexibility

The common themes and opportunities for improvement are helpful as we develop strategies to improve relationships. In some cases, multiple common themes and opportunities for improvement overlap, demonstrating that the issues, causes and solutions are interwoven.

Theme 1: Communication

In our experience, when relationships are strained, communication issues are the predominant cause. When communication is not optimal, performance and service delivery decline, while trust often erodes. Our observations are that communication is indeed the dominant contributing factor to the challenges faced by HG and city staff.

Participants were very forthcoming about communications issues. Recognizing their advisory role to Council, HG members expressed concerns that their advice was not always accurately communicated to Council. HG members expressed a lack of clarity about the city's heritage work plans and priorities. In addition, HG members were unclear about challenges the city is facing that might impact HG's mandate. HG members also noted that roles, procedures and legislative framework were not well understood. Sharing this information was identified as something that would help HG appreciate competing interests. In this regard, lines of communication were not always viewed as open.

How communication occurs was noted as requiring more understanding and respect, even when opinions differ. Participants also expressed concerns that litigating disagreements in the press was not helpful to the relationship.

Theme 1: Communication

Ensuring that the community has a greater appreciation of the importance of preserving local heritage was also highlighted as something that would be very beneficial.

The good news is that communication can be improved. When communication is strong, trust improves. When communication is effective, and trust is present, other issues also become easier to address.

Theme 1: Communication Opportunities for Improvement

- HG and city staff should discuss and collaborate on the development of annual work plans

- HG should include a Council member on the committee who can bring the heritage conversation to the Council table

- City staff should develop protocols to communicate information about activities or issues that may impact HG's mandate

- HG and city staff should manage conflict internally rather than through Council or the press

- Lines of communication should be opened between other committees whose mandates occasionally intersect with HG's mandate

- Communication opportunities with the community should be explored to increase awareness about the importance of preserving local heritage and to demystify the myths about heritage preservation

- The Plaque program should be promoted, as should other heritage accomplishments and good news stories

Theme 2: Resources

Participants discussed the importance of adequate resources, whether financial, physical or human resources. There was a significant viewpoint by participants, supported by polling, that Guelph's single full-time heritage planner is not sufficient. Participants acknowledged that the Senior Heritage Planner is an excellent resource, but he is unable to carry the full burden of the heritage workload. Participants noted that staff capacity issues can hinder heritage efforts.

Participants did recognize that Council has directed staff to include an additional heritage resource for consideration in the 2022 budget deliberations. However, it was acknowledged that there is no guarantee that an additional heritage resource will be approved due to the many competing financial priorities.

Participants also noted that increased financial resources could assist with HG member training, programming and outreach.

Theme 2: Resources Opportunities for Improvement

- An additional heritage staff resource should be considered

- Where possible, HG members or university students should be leveraged to assist with various tasks

- There should be a member of Council on HG to help carry the heritage conversation at Council

- There should be more diversity on HG

- There should an outreach campaign to attract more candidates to volunteer to serve on HG

- Financial resources are needed for training, programs and outreach

Theme 3: Collaboration

When communication is not optimal, sense of team or common goals can be lost. Participants noted that collaboration could be improved. Specifically, HG members indicated that they were unaware of the city's heritage work plans and priorities. In addition, HG members felt that sharing and even collaborating in work plan development would be helpful for them to understand why certain decisions are made. HG's Terms of Reference were identified as a document that could be worked on collaboratively when it is updated to help garner buy in.

Participants noted that promoting heritage conservation should be a collaborative effort between HG members and city staff. In addition, participants felt that HG and other committees whose mandates occasionally intersect could benefit from collaborating on common goals, where appropriate. Doing so together was viewed as an opportunity to build relationships and share information.

Theme 3: Collaboration Opportunities for Improvement

- HG and city staff should collaborate to develop annual work plans, as well as share key goals and accomplishment with Council

- HG and city staff should collaborate to develop outreach initiatives – "getting our good news stories out to the public"

- HG and city staff should collaborate on updating the HG Terms of Reference to align with other policies or plans when appropriate

- HG and other committees whose mandates occasionally intersect should collaborate on common goals, when appropriate, rather than operating independently

- HG and city staff should work together to build and promote a positive work environment

Theme 4: Outreach

Many participants commented that fostering public education, awareness, participation and appreciation of the conservation of cultural heritage resources was limited. It was noted that these activities constitute part of HG's mandate as set out in Council's approved HG Terms of Reference. Outreach was viewed as an opportunity to increase public interest, promote the benefits of heritage conservation and make the public aware of HG's accomplishments.

Participants noted that it would be motivating for HG members to be able to deliver good news stories about HG's hard work. Incentive programs were also identified as another way to gain public support for heritage conservation.

Participants noted the added benefits of educating the public would be to help alleviate some of the apprehensions about the heritage review process felt by potential applicants.

Theme 4: Outreach Opportunities for Improvement

- HG and city staff should develop outreach strategies to demystify the myths about heritage and increase awareness about the importance and benefits of conserving heritage

- The Plaque program has fallen behind and it should be prioritized to get caught up

- HG and city staff should communicate HG success stories to the public

- The city should develop financial incentive programs to garner more interest in preserving heritage

Theme 5: Training

HG members felt they would benefit from initial on-boarding training, as well as on-going training or professional development opportunities. HG members felt they needed more knowledge to help them perform their duties.

HG members expressed that training would help them better understand the challenges faced by the city and opportunities available to support local heritage. HG members indicated that they understood that training would be made available throughout their term, however, this has not come to pass. Senior city staff was supportive of training and other learning opportunities for sharing relevant information with HG members to help them with their roles. This could include work plans, policies, budgets, and legislation.

Theme 5: Training Opportunities for Improvement

- The city should develop a robust on-boarding training program for all new members, or at the beginning of a new term

- The city should offer regular opportunities for members to receive formal or informal training or professional development from city staff who are engaged in initiatives that may impact HG's mandate (i.e. new policies or plans, growth strategies, new legislation, budgets, etc.)

- HG and city staff should participate in team building/conflict management training

Theme 6: Flexibility

Participants acknowledged that HG operates on a more formal basis than other committees. The formality results in less free flow discussion and exchange of information. A less formal setting should contribute to increased dialogue and ideas, a better understanding of issues and problem solving. Collaborating through less formal two-way discussion to find creative solutions and generate ideas was considered a positive motivator for all participants.

Participants noted that processes, or interpretation of processes such as Procedural Policies, may be unnecessarily rigid at times. This rigidity is considered non-conducive to open discussion and problem solving. Rigidity was also identified as something that can carry forward after HG meetings when HG recommendations are presented to Council through a "staff-oriented process".

Theme 6: Flexibility Opportunities for Improvement

- Meetings should be less formal to allow issues to be discussed openly and to encourage greater exchange of ideas

- City staff should support discussing ideas and opportunities even if they don't always align with past decisions, where appropriate

Workshop Conclusions

Is success attainable?

Workshop Conclusions

At the conclusion of each workshop, participants were asked for their closing thoughts. The comments offered by participants were very encouraging. Participants expressed their appreciation for being able to participate in a productive discussion. It was noted that the groups are not far apart on the issues or solutions. In fact, they are quite aligned.

A few sample participant comments included, "I was surprised by the consistency and the unity of mind" and "we came together as a divided group, but we want the same things. We just didn't know how to share that with each other".

One participant opined, "It's a relationship. We need to work and foster our relationships and be respectful of each other. We need to be comfortable with being uncomfortable at times."

The closing comments suggest the groups are of the right frame of mind to put aside the past and work on building strong and productive relationships. To that end, the participants' twenty-seven "opportunities for improvement" should be viewed as a starting point, not the finish line.

Executive Summary

Heritage Committee Best Practices Review

"The only sure weapon against bad ideas is better ideas."

Alfred Whitney Griswold, 16th President of Yale University

Executive Summary: Best Practice Review

MGW proposed optional best practice interviews with two (2) municipalities to supplement the outcomes of facilitation. The purpose of the best practice interviews was to identify lessons learned and best practices that have been successfully implemented to strengthen relationships and communication. Best practice reviews also allows us to test the viability of the opportunities for improvement, arising from the workshops. The city selected the best practice interviews option.

As noted, initially two (2) municipal heritage committees were to be review. However, a third municipal heritage committee, the City of Ottawa, was added because it faced a series of challenges that it responded to by undertaking a review of its committee TOR.

The municipalities chosen for interviews were:

City of Waterloo (Municipal Heritage Committee)

Town of Oakville (Heritage Oakville Municipal Advisory Committee)

City of Ottawa (Built Heritage Sub-Committee)

Executive Summary: Best Practice Review

Research included a review of each committees' TOR followed by interviews with municipal heritage staff. Interview questions were informed by the common themes and the opportunities for improvement that emerged during the facilitation workshops conducted with HG and staff.

For ease of reference, we have cross-referenced the best practice feedback received from the municipalities with the common themes identified in our Facilitation Summary. Responses to best practice questions aligned with the common themes and opportunities for improvement.

City of Waterloo

The City of Waterloo is a lower tier municipality with a 2016 population of 104,986 (Canada Census). The City's website indicates that the population as of 2017 is 137,420 (including students and temporary residents). The most recent update to the Municipal Heritage Committee's TOR was in 2018. Committee composition ranges from 5 to 10 members, including a member of council, members of the community and a representative of each Heritage Conservation District. Candidate members with relatable experience are considered an asset. These include, Material or Built Heritage Conservation, Architecture, Building Industry, Urban Planning, Local History, Museology, Landscape Architecture, and Archaeology.

City of Waterloo

Sharing Information

The committee is encouraged to make their views known and are welcome to work with staff to submit memos or reports directly to Council when appropriate. This has contributed to a high degree of trust between the committee, council, and staff. When staff prepares the annual workplan they are guided by feedback and commentary provided throughout the year by the committee. This has also contributed to strong relationships.

Communication was described as "open", with staff sharing information to help the committee achieve its mandate.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

1. **Communication**

2. **Resources**

3. **Collaboration**

City of Waterloo

Council Member on Committee

Staff indicated that the member of Council who sits on the committee is viewed as very helpful at communicating the committee's views at the Council table. The Council member is an advocate for the committee, helping curb rigidity by encouraging flexible and objective discussions. The most notable comment by staff regarding Council membership on the committee was that a Council member helps to "put a check on staff". Council participation on the committee was viewed positively by staff.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

1. **Communication**

2. **Resources**

6. **Flexibility**

City of Waterloo

Celebrating the Wins

Committees are invited to Council annually on "Council Night" to present their success stories with the support of the Council member on the committee. This provides an opportunity to talk about "all the wins amongst the many challenges". This was viewed as a morale booster and trust builder. The committee also produces outreach documents such as an Online Newsletter to promote local heritage conservation.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

1. **Communication**

4. **Outreach**

City of Waterloo

Working Together

There is currently one full-time heritage planner. The staff member advised that the relationship with the committee is strong now, though at one time it was less so. Staff and committee both had to work at building trust to get to where they are today. The staff member confirmed that several members have relatable experience as engineers, architects, and historians. The staff member asserted that staff relies heavily on the committee members' skillsets to help guide staff and advance the committee's mandate.

Staff further advised that committee members are viewed as "allies who help staff get more work done" through advising staff. The committee was described as an "asset" to staff.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

2. **Resources**

3. **Collaboration**

City of Waterloo

Education and Keeping Open Minds

Staff offer on-boarding training to new members and on-going training about legislative changes, city projects, Community Improvement Plans (CIP), etc. Project managers attend the committee regularly to update them.

Staff advise that, while not frequent, there are occasions when it makes sense to revisit past decisions or discuss topics that may not align with past decisions. These infrequent discussions are encouraged and viewed as opportunities to discuss challenges and learn from them.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

5. Training

6. Flexibility

Town of Oakville

The Town of Oakville is a lower tier municipality with a 2016 population of 193,832 (Canada Census). The Town's website indicates that the population as of 2020 is 215,700. The most recent update to the Municipal Heritage Committee's Terms of Reference (TORs) was in 2020. The TORs have been updated frequently to respond to needs. The Committee composition includes nine (9) citizens-at-large members and two (2) members of Council who cannot serve as Chair or Vice-Chair. Tenure as Chair or Vice-Chair is limited to two consecutive years unless committee unanimously consents to longer terms. Where possible, appointments to the committee will include representatives from relatable committees such as Historical Societies, Residents Associations, BIA's, etc. Working groups (a sub-group of the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee), may be created to assist in research or review of a given item and provide a detailed report back to the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee.

Town of Oakville

Council Member(s) on Committee

When discussing the role of two Councillors on the committee, staff described participation of Council members on the committee as "very helpful". Staff expressed that Council members on the committee help to keep the communication strong between the committee and Council at critical decision points.

In addition, staff confirmed that residents appreciate the fact that members of Council are involved with the committee.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

1. **Communication**

2. **Resources**

Town of Oakville

Working Together, Recognition and Celebrating the Wins

Although staff prepares the annual work plan, they consult with the committee on content before it is finalized. Staff stated that ideas get discussed, and that staff welcome open discussion. Staff advised that they have worked hard to develop a culture of flexibility. Draft policies are also brought to committee for feedback. The Town also provides various informal opportunities to pass along thank you wishes to committee members throughout their tenure.

Town of Oakville

The Town also produces a comprehensive [Heritage Update Newsletter](#), signed by the Chair that outlines good news stories such as restoration projects, the plaque program and, cultural heritage landscapes.

According to staff, this collaborative and flexible culture has contributed to a "great relationship" between the committee and staff.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

1. **Communication**

3. **Collaboration**

4. **Outreach**

6. **Flexibility**

Town of Oakville

Balancing the Workload

The Town has two full-time heritage staff and, during spikes in workload, they have added up to two additional contract staff. The Town also participates in Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) volunteer initiatives and job shadowing to help with workload.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

2.   **Resources**

Education

The Town has developed robust half day on-boarding training for all new members and for new terms. There are regular training opportunities where experts (planners, building staff, lawyers) from the Town attend to present formal and informal training. Attendance at provincial and national conferences is encouraged but not currently funded.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

5.   **Training**

City of Ottawa

The City of Ottawa is a single tier municipality with a 2016 population of 934,243 (Canada Census). The city's highway signage indicates that the population is now 1,000,000. Ottawa is a much larger municipality than the City of Guelph and the other municipalities reviewed. However, Ottawa was added for additional review because its heritage committee had experienced several challenges that caused Ottawa to revisit its Terms of Reference (TORs).

The update that created the new Built Heritage Sub-committee TOR occurred in 2012, however, Governance Reviews occur regularly. The staff report in support of new TORs reads, "Committee has faced a number of problems including high attrition and inability to recruit a sufficient number of members with appropriate experience and expertise. There has also been a lack of integration between Planning Committee, Ottawa Built Heritage Advisory Committee (OBHAC) and external heritage experts." Prior to 2012 the Committee was comprised entirely of citizen members. The new TORs were significantly altered to include five (5) members of Council, one who is Chair, plus four (4) citizen members. As a result, a majority of committee is now comprised of Council members. Membership must include at least one (1) member of Council who is a member of Planning Committee, one (1) who is a member of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee and one (1) whose ward encompasses a Heritage Conservation District.

City of Ottawa

Council Member(s) on Committee

Staff advised that the addition of five members of Council to the committee has elevated the profile of heritage significantly not only with Council, but in general. This change has been viewed as beneficial; however, it has resulted in meetings becoming more formal, resulting is less discussion at times. Even with more formality, meetings were described as running better. We note that having the committee being largely made up of members of Council could marginalize the role of citizen members.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

1.   **Communication**

3.   **Collaboration**

City of Ottawa

Working Together

Work plans are produced by staff and brought to committee annually for input. Staff is open to receiving feedback and do make amendments based on feedback from committee.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

3. **Collaboration**

Celebrating the Wins

The city does have a plaque program that is promoted. Awards are also pursued.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

4. **Outreach**

City of Ottawa

Education

The city provides on-boarding training to new members or at the beginning of a new term. Several citizen member committees at the city have on-going training or professional development opportunities throughout their term. Staff who are engaged in activities that might impact committee mandates attend committees to present on those activities.

Facilitation Common Theme Alignment:

5. **Training**

Conclusions: Best Practice Reviews

All three municipalities reported good relations with their committees. Our interviews lead us to conclude that each municipalities' practices are progressive and contribute to a culture of collaboration that serves their municipalities well. Many of the practices align with the common themes and opportunities for improvement that emerged during the HG facilitated workshops. This alignment validates feedback from the workshops including the opportunities for improvement.

With respect to Council membership on the committees, all three municipalities have at least one member of Council on their committees. All report that having a member (or members) of Council on their committees is beneficial. The City of Ottawa model that includes five (5) out nine (9) members being members of Council appears to work well for Ottawa. We note; however, that this model can result in an imbalance of members that could marginalize participation from citizen members. The number of Councillors has also been reported to contribute to more formalities in how Ottawa's committee functions. If the intent is to collect public input, this model may not be optimal. We do not view the Ottawa model as an appropriate model for the City of Guelph. However, we are of the opinion that one or two members of Council on the committee would help to address common themes. Therefore, either the Oakville or Waterloo models are recommended.

Conclusions: Best Practice Reviews

All three municipalities have conducted regular TOR updates or governance reviews, whereas Guelph has not updated its TOR for quite some time. It is considered a best practice to review TORs at least every five (5) years. Many municipalities conduct TOR or governance reviews more frequently to ensure consistency with changing legislation, policy or emerging trends. In our experience as Municipal Service Delivery Consultants, service delivery can be negatively impacted when TORs and governance models are not monitored and adapted to changing conditions.

There was some commentary that Clerks staff participation on the committee is limited due to volume of work. Clerk staff participation at HG was viewed as beneficial. As noted in our introductory comments, twenty-nine (29) boards and committees is a relatively high number for a municipality to administer. Boards and committees can be a significant draw on finite human resources. Each board and committee requires staff resources to prepare for meetings, issue notices, produce agendas and minutes, attend meetings, write reports, follow up on decisions, etc. Combining board or committee mandates where possible can free up staff resources that can either be redirected to other priorities or allow for more time and effort directed towards improving the quality of services delivered. There may be an opportunity for the city to conduct a review of the number of boards and committees during its next governance review.

Next Steps

The feedback collected during the workshops and best practice review are closely aligned. There is an opportunity to turn this into a win for everyone. With continuous improvement as a key driver and willingness to discuss issues with an open mind, we believe the group will be on the right path. Measures of success or KPI's should be established to help confirm progress.

We offer the following recommendations as the next steps:

1. As a first step, that the General Manager of Planning & Building Services assume the role of management champion who will ensure follow up on the next steps and monitor progress.

2. It must be acknowledged that everything can't happen at once. Therefore, prioritization and orderly implementation of the selected opportunities for improvement will be essential. Next, we recommend HG and staff meet to review and prioritize the opportunities for improvement.

3. Once a strategy has been developed, as a first step towards improved collaboration, HG and staff should summarize it and present it to Council together as a team.

4. We recommend that HG and staff report to Council annually on progress made.

Next Steps

5. We recommend that TORs be reviewed at least every five (5) years, or sooner if emerging conditions present themselves.

6. We recommend that the city review the number and mandates of its boards and committees during its next governance review with the view of identifying efficiencies to enhance service delivery priorities.

We believe that the HG and staff have the will needed to affect change and that successful outcomes are attainable.

We thank the City of Guelph and the members of Heritage Guelph for their participation in this important initiative.

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www.MGWayfinders.com