

# Information Report

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Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Monday, December 11, 2023
Subject	<b>Heritage Guelph Facilitation Exercise Final Report</b>

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## Purpose of Report

To provide Heritage Guelph with a final report addressing the priority opportunities of the Facilitation Exercise conducted in 2021 and actions taken to address them.

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## Report

Municipal Government Wayfinders Ltd. was contracted in spring 2021 to facilitate discussions between Heritage Guelph and city staff to “focus on identifying issues and facilitating discussions which result in agreed upon resolutions and overall improvement of the staff/committee relationship”. The exercise resulted in the identification of opportunities for improvement set out in the [final report of June 2021](#).

The facilitation exercise was initiated to address concerns about strained relationships between committee members and staff during the latter part of 2020/early 2021. Since that time, the City’s policies and procedures for Advisory Committees of Council have been updated and provide guidance to committee members and staff on their roles and responsibilities. Also, the Heritage Guelph committee membership has changed in its entirety. As of December 2023, no current member was involved with the facilitation exercise.

Staff note that communication, in terms of both substance and tone, has improved and that meetings are running smoothly with most members contributing to discussions and freely sharing their comments and opinions.

Staff resources have increased and allow for more time for discussions/engagement with members and opportunities for outreach events with the community. Staff have collaborated with the committee to identify opportunities for improvement, such as the new process for consulting the committee on Part IV designation research and reports introduced in June 2023.

The Heritage Guelph committee and staff share a commitment to focus on priority work plan items which includes heritage conservation district studies under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and heritage designations under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Committee members were instrumental in determining priorities for designation research and staff are thankful for their contributions. We also look forward to continuing discussions with the committee on an annual basis to set priorities for research.

Through the leadership of the chair, committee meetings are congenial with members being encouraged to participate and share their thoughts. Overall, the tone of meetings is positive even when faced with difficult conversations such as demolitions. Members share constructive feedback in a supportive manner and their comments and resolutions are shared in staff reports to Council.

Through the Strategic Plan, we are committed to improving the effectiveness of advisory committees and to advancing diversity, inclusion, accessibility, anti-racism and equity. The City Clerk's Office is leading a project to redesign advisory committees of Council (ACOCs) in Guelph. Phase one of this project ended with the Council approval of a new [Advisory Committees of Council Governance Framework](#) (the Framework). The Framework establishes seven key commitments of ACOCs which reinforce the important role advisory committees play in the policy-making process in Guelph. Phase two of this project is the application of the Framework to existing ACOCs. This review will ensure that Guelph's ACOCs have reviewed and updated terms of reference and are resourced appropriately to ensure their success. Recommendations coming from phase two of the project may include the creation, merger or dissolution of ACOCs to ensure compliance with the Framework. This phase of the project, like phase one, will be done in collaboration with advisory committees and advisory committee members. Phase two will begin in early 2024 and conclude in Q4 2024.

While this is the final report with respect to the facilitation exercise, there is ongoing commitment to the opportunities and actions that were identified.

## **Attachments**

Attachment-1: Heritage Guelph Facilitation Exercise Priority Actions Summary

## **Report Author**

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