

Advisory Committee of Council Staff Report



To Accessibility Advisory Committee
Date Tuesday, April 15, 2025
Subject **October 17th, 2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee Resolution Follow-up – Orientation Materials**

Recommendation

1. That the October 17th, 2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee Resolution Follow-up – Orientation Materials report, dated April 15th, 2025, be received.
-

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

On October 17th, 2024, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) passed a resolution seeking input into the materials that will be used in orientation and education meetings for AAC members. Included as Attachment-1 and Attachment-2 are two draft slide decks that will be used as part of the initial orientation for new Advisory Committees of Council (ACOCs) and new ACOC members.

Please note that departmental specific orientation materials for each ACOC will be developed by subject matter experts from relevant departments and are not included in this report. The materials attached to this report are designed to be delivered by the City Clerk's Office to all the City's ACOCs.

Key Findings

The City Clerk's Office will deliver initial orientation, education and training to all seven of the newly revised ACOCs when they begin meeting in June and July 2025. Any feedback that the AAC can provide regarding these materials will help ensure the successful implementation of that orientation program.

Strategic Plan Alignment

This report supports the Lead with Accountability objective of the City's Strategic Plan by reviewing the effectiveness of City Council and ACOC processes.

Future Guelph Theme

Foundations

Future Guelph Objectives

Foundations: Lead with accountability

Financial Implications

None.

Report

The included attachments represent the City Clerk's Office portion of the ACOC orientation and onboarding process. Orientation and training related to the various subject matter focuses of ACOCs will be prepared by staff liaisons and is not included in this report.

City staff welcome any feedback, comments or advice regarding these materials, including recommended changes, gaps, clarity, etc. These materials are draft and in the early stages of development, feedback from the AAC regarding changes and amendments can be incorporated prior to the establishment of new ACOCs later this spring/summer.

Financial Implications

None.

Consultations

None.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Draft General Roles, Responsibilities and Procedural Training

Attachment-2 Draft Chair and Vice-Chair Training

Departmental Approval

None.

Report Author

Dylan McMahon, Acting General Manager, City Clerk's Office/City Clerk

This report was approved by:

Dylan McMahon

Acting General Manager, City Clerk's Office/City Clerk

Corporate Services

519-822-1260 extension 2811

dylan.mcmahon@guelph.ca

General Roles, Responsibilities and Procedural Training for ACOC Support Staff

Dylan McMahon, Acting General Manager, City Clerk's
Office / City Clerk

DRAFT

Agenda

1. Advisory Committees of Council (ACOC) Governance Framework
2. Legislative requirements for local boards
3. Code of Conduct for City Council and Local Boards
4. Roles and responsibilities for staff, ACOC members and the chair
5. Basic procedural training (how and when to pass resolutions, correct wording of resolutions, voting, etc.)
6. What to include on agendas
7. What not to include on agendas
8. General best practices

ACOCs are a big experiment in democracy

- 100s of residents of Guelph; 1000s of residents across Ontario
- But...ACOCs are rarely researched or evaluated, and there are few resources to support municipalities
- The purpose of the ACOC Governance Framework is to guide the creation, design, function, and evaluation of ACOCs in Guelph

How did we create the framework?

- Community engaged scholarship - brings together academic and non-academic partners to identify and respond to community-identified problems
- Collaboration between City staff and researchers, supported by Guelph Lab
- Working group of eight existing ACOC members

Framework highlights: 7 commitments

1. ACOCs are a form of community engagement
2. ACOCs should help shape the City's strategic goals
3. ACOCs should adopt deliberative practices
4. ACOCs should contribute lived and professional expertise
5. ACOCs should have diverse membership
6. There should be clear communication between ACOCs and City Council
7. ACOCs should be adequately resourced

Framework highlights: 6 critical features

- Effective communication between ACOC members and City Council
- Staff liaisons with strategic-level responsibilities
- Clear, up to date, regularly revisited terms of reference
- New recruitment efforts to engage with and recruit diverse members for ACOCs (currently unfunded)
- Compensation and coverage of participation-related expenses (currently unfunded)
- Adequate resources to support the full functioning of ACOCs

Legislative Requirements for Local Boards

- All meetings must be open to the public
- All decisions of an ACOC must be made through resolutions of the ACOC
- Where ACOC feedback is provided on a topic that is going before City Council, all ACOC resolutions must be communicated in full to City Council
- Meeting notice and agendas must be published in advance of the meeting
- Meeting minutes must be posted publicly following meetings

What is a meeting?

- A meeting is anytime a quorum of the ACOC is together talking about ACOC business
- Quorum is whatever number of members represents a majority of the currently appointed ACOC members
- A meeting that occurs without proper public notice is an illegal meeting
- All meetings must be held with prior notice given to the public, be open to the public to attend, have agenda materials posted publicly and have minutes posted publicly following the meeting

How does the ACOC provide feedback to staff and Council?

- The only way that an ACOC can provide formal feedback to staff or City Council is through the passing of a resolution
- Resolutions must be moved, seconded and then voted on
- A simple 50% + 1 majority of the members present is all that's needed to approve a resolution
- Comments given from an individual member do not constitute formal feedback to staff or City Council

How is ACOC feedback communicated to staff and City Council?

- ACOCs provide advice directly to staff and through staff to City Council
- Advice from an ACOC to staff can be made through a resolution at a meeting and no further reporting is required
- Advice from an ACOC about an item that requires City Council approval must be included in full in the relevant staff report
- Advice from an ACOC to City Council on an item not scheduled to go before City Council is communicated through the posting of minutes in the weekly information items

Code of Conduct for City Council and Local Boards

- The Code of Conduct applies to all ACOC members
- The Code of Conduct covers all behaviour, regardless of whether it takes place in-person, online or on social media
- Many sections of the Code of Conduct are only applicable to members of City Council

Code of Conduct for City Council and Local Boards Continued

Sections of the [Code of Conduct](#) that are relevant to ACOC members:

- Gifts and Benefits
- Confidentiality
- Conduct
- Influence on Staff
- Improper use of Influence
- Conflicts of Interest

Detailed Code of Conduct training will be available to members at a later date.

Role of Staff Liaisons Supporting ACOCs

- Advise on high-level decision-making and bring deep knowledge regarding the strategic goals and priorities of the City
- Communicate and collaborate with members and other City staff to ensure ACOC contributions are sought early in policy and planning discussions
- Facilitate communications between City staff, chairs, vice-chairs, and members and maximize the value of the ACOC to inform the strategic goals and priorities of the City
- Provide opportunities for members to learn technical terms, knowledge and skills related to the ACOC's mandate
- Practice facilitation, conflict management, consensus-building and related skills, as well as awareness of how inequities can be perpetuated even through deliberative approaches

Role of City Clerk's Office Staff Supporting ACOCs:

- Ensure that members are well-informed regarding meeting procedures and rules for participation
- Coordinate meetings, including communicating and finalizing dates, times, and locations to all relevant parties
- With the assistance of the staff liaison, provide secretariat and technical support including the preparation, publication and distribution of meeting agendas and minutes in accordance with the terms of reference, other relevant policies, legislation, and by-laws
- Facilitate chair and committee members' presentations at City Council meetings

Role of ACOC Members

- Be well-prepared to attend and participate in meetings and contribute skills, knowledge, and experience with respect to the ACOC mandate and objectives
- Be curious and flexible in discussions, valuing and encouraging diverse viewpoints
- Understand and respect the roles and expectations of all participants
- Attend mandatory training

Basic Meeting Procedures

- ACOCs must abide by the City's Procedure Bylaw and the ACOC Meeting Procedures
- Parliamentary procedure ensures fair and equitable decision making
- ACOCs can only formally advise staff and City Council through resolutions
- The City Clerk's Office is your resource if meeting procedures are becoming cumbersome or confusing at ACOC meetings
- 90% of parliamentary procedure is as simple as:
 - A member moves a motion
 - A member seconds the motion
 - Debate and discussion take place
 - Members vote on the motion, 50% + 1 of the members present is required for the resolution to be approved

How to Write Resolutions

Good Resolution Examples:

- That the Fantastic Guelph Transit Strategy, included as Attachment-1 to the Future of Guelph Transit Report, dated January 1, 2025, be approved.
- That the feedback provided by the Transit Advisory Committee regarding the draft Fantastic Guelph Transit Strategy, included as Attachment-1 to the Future of Guelph Transit report, dated January 1, 2023, be considered by staff for inclusion in the final report.

How to Write Resolutions Continued

Not So Good Resolutions:

- That the Fantastic Guelph Transit Strategy report be endorsed.
- That the feedback provided by the Transit Advisory Committee be considered by staff.

The worst resolution of all - is no resolution at all!

ACOC Agendas

- ACOC agendas are developed by staff, reviewed and approved by the ACOC chair, and then posted publicly ~1 week prior to the meeting date
- ACOC agendas and agendas items must be consistent with the Terms of Reference and provincial legislation (if applicable)
- Members of ACOCs can request that items be added to future agendas
- Information provided by staff to an ACOC will be in writing and will often include presentations and reports
- Reports from staff will include a recommendation and all of the information that the ACOC needs to make a decision
- Verbal updates will be limited to announcements and updates which don't require ACOC feedback and are for information only

We're Here to Help!

- You can email advisorycommittees@guelph.ca
- The Legislative Services team can provide procedural advice and anything else needed to ensure an ACOC is successful

Advisory Committee of Council Chair and Vice- Chair Training

DRAFT

Responsibilities of the Chair

- Agenda Planning
- Meeting Flow and Decorum
- Procedural Rulings
- Overall Meeting Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Open Dialogue with Support Staff and the Clerk's Office

Agenda Planning

- Review and approve agendas in collaboration with the staff liaison and City Clerk's Office, prior to publication on Guelph.ca
- Collaborate with staff liaisons to re-prioritize and re-arrange agenda items if meeting volume limits deliberative discussions
- Ensure proposed agendas can be completed during the allotted time, prioritize agenda items, etc.

Procedure By-law

- The purpose of the [Procedure By-law](#) and the Advisory Committees of Council [Meeting Procedures](#) is to guide the order and dispatch of committee business
- Focus on working through the agenda using basic procedures, these procedures enable the chair and committee to keep the meeting moving
- Procedures are designed to further the will of the committee, not restrain it
- Chairs can't put forward motions and, as a best practice, should present their opinion last or simply through their vote to facilitate broader discussion amongst the members

Meeting Flow and Decorum

- It's the chair's job to keep the meeting moving, leading the ACOC through agenda items and managing meeting time
- It's the chair's job to ensure that the behaviour of all meeting participants is in keeping with the Code of Conduct and Procedure By-law
- Engage with ACOC members, facilitate deliberative discussions, and resolve conflicts to ensure sufficient opportunities to engage members in deliberative discussions

Appropriate Behaviour

- Committee members may not:
 - Use offensive words or speak disrespectfully of members of the Committee, the public or City staff
 - Speak on any subject not under debate
 - Speak in contempt of any decision of the Committee
 - Disobey a ruling or decision of the chair, Council or Committee
 - Interrupt or enter into debate with a delegate
- If a member violates these rules, they should be called to order by the Chair.

Appropriate Behaviour Continued

- Delegates and the public may not:
 - Address the Committee without permission
 - Engage in any behaviours which affect Committee deliberations (jeering, shouting, clapping, etc.)
 - Bring any signs or placards to the Committee meeting, distribute leaflets, etc.
 - Make detrimental comments or malign the integrity of Committee members, staff or other members of the public
- If an individual violates these rules, they should be called to order by the chair

Procedural Rulings

- The chair rules on all questions regarding the application of the Procedure Bylaw
- This includes discretionary rulings (such as calling a member to order for disrespectful behaviour) and required rulings in response to a point of order or privilege
- Points of order are rare at advisory committee meetings, but chairs are encouraged to rule in a way that respects everyone's right to an effective and efficient meeting
- If you need procedural advice or support, the City Clerk's Office is here to help

No Surprises, No Ambushes

- Committee agendas are circulated about a week in advance
- This provides the public, committee members and staff time to review materials, ask questions and prepare answers
- To the greatest extent possible, questions of staff should be raised prior to the meeting
- Proposed amendments and resolutions should be submitted in writing to advisorycommittees@guelph.ca in advance of meetings whenever possible
- Surprise resolutions lead to ineffective and inefficient meetings

Open Communication

- The staff liaison and City Clerk's Office are available to the chair and committee members to answer questions
- Work with staff in advance of meetings to ensure effective use of the committee's time during meetings
- Staff will not surprise the committee with last minute changes or information