General Roles, Responsibilities and Procedural Training for ACOC Support Staff

Garrett Meades, Acting Manager, Legislative Services / Deputy Clerk

Winnie Chan, Board and Committee Coordinator

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. Lobbyist Registry
5. Terms of Reference
6. Roles and responsibilities for staff, ACOC members and the chair
7. Basic procedural training (how and when to pass resolutions, correct wording of resolutions, voting, etc.)
8. What to include on agendas
9. What not to include on agendas
10. 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

- 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

Lobbyist Registry

- What is a Lobbyist Registry?

- What is lobbying

- Impacts to Advisory Committee Members

- Resources available to Advisory Committee Members and the public

Terms of Reference

- Overview of the Terms of Reference
  - Mandate
  - Composition
  - Meeting Schedule and Format

- One year review timeline

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