

**Subject:** 2022-2026 Advisory Committee Structure  
Recommendation

**Recommendation:**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report # 2022-0208 - 2022-2026 Advisory Committee Structure Recommendation, for information;**

**AND THAT Council approve, in principle, restructuring Town of Pelham Ad Hoc Advisory Committees into three (3) types of committees, being:**

- 1) Advisory Committees;**
- 2) Statutory Committees; and**
- 3) Working Groups;**

**AND THAT Council direct staff to review the Town's current advisory committees and to prepare revised terms of reference and committee recommendations for the 2022-2026 Council Term in a report to be delivered on December 19, 2022.**

**Background:**

The review of Pelham's committee structure is a routine process which occurs at the beginning/end of each Council cycle. It generally supports the (current) strategic plan goal of supporting a strong organization through reviewing the terms of reference for committees and boards.

The current Town of Pelham Procedural By-Law 4107(2019), as amended, stipulates Council may create ad hoc committees, commonly referred to as advisory committees. Currently, the majority of Pelham's committees are advisory, which is to say that they are optional/voluntary. The Town also operates committees which are statutory (Committee of Adjustment, Accessibility Advisory, Lincoln Pelham Union Library Board, Livestock Valuer & Pound Keeper).

Advisory committees are established by Council via resolution and by-law. These committees typically have a defined area of focus, defined by their terms of reference. Frequently committees are able to develop greater levels of expertise in specific areas and then provide advice to Town Council on various options, policy initiatives and potential courses of action. As a default committees last for the entire term of Council, however they can also be designed to have shorter durations, and can end when a goal/task is accomplished or at the end of defined amount of time.

Membership requirements for advisory committees include at least one (1) Member of Council, at least one (1) Town of Pelham staff liaison and various Town of Pelham residents, stakeholders and/or field experts.

Currently the Council for the Town of Pelham has established seventeen (17) advisory committees for the 2018 – 2022 term, being:

- Pelham Finance and Audit Committee
- Cannabis Control Committee
- Committee of Adjustment
- Community Beautification Committee
- Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Livestock Valuer and Pound keeper
- Meridian Community Centre ("MCC") Hospitality Committee
- Meridian Community Centre ("MCC") User Groups Committee
- Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee
- Pelham Active Transportation Committee
- Pelham Arts Advisory Committee
- Pelham Seniors Advisory Committee
- Pelham Summerfest Committee
- Pelham Thursday Night Experience Committee
- Utility Sustainability Advisory Committee
- Lincoln Pelham Union Public Library Board
- Mayor Youth Advisory Committee

Over the past term of Council, it has become clear that the Town is operating too many committees relative to its size. This spreads the volunteer base thinly, is a challenge to support adequately amongst the existing staff compliment and also creates a large demand upon a limited pool of elected officials.

### **Analysis:**

Ad hoc committees are intended to provide important advice and guidance to Council. This is true and common practice for many of the committees established by Council, however there are several committees which do not provide advice and

guidance, rather organize, execute and oversee important projects and tasks on behalf of the Town of Pelham.

Staff recommend Council formally establish three (3) categories of committee structure: advisory committees, statutory committees and volunteer working groups. Staff recommend advisory committees be established to provide Council advice and guidance on a specific initiative or matter while volunteer working groups operate to execute important projects, events or tasks on behalf of the Town. Statutory committees are obligatory and will continue to fulfill provincial requirements.

### **Advisory Committees**

Staff propose that advisory committees continue to be established by Council via resolution and by-law. Advisory committees shall be governed by terms of reference as approved by Council. Membership shall include at least one (1) Member of Council and at least one (1) Town of Pelham staff liaison in addition to the residents, stakeholders and/or field experts defined within the terms of reference. Advisory committees shall continue to run with the term of Council, unless Council wishes to indicate otherwise.

Staff recommend advisory committees continue to be governed by the Procedural By-law and parliamentary rules. It is important that procedures be defined and that advisory committees remain accountable and transparent to the public in their decision-making and policy recommendation processes. Parliamentary procedure provides the committees with structure and a consistent format which aids in making decisions, goals and objectives democratically.

Staff recommend that existing administrative responsibilities remain, such as record keeping, routine Council updates, publishing agendas and publishing minutes to the website and Council agenda.

Staff recommend committees such as: Cannabis Control Committee, Pelham Finance and Audit Committee and Pelham Active Transportation Committee remain in the advisory committee structure. Committees such as these have specialized knowledge and regularly make recommendations to Council. The establishment of specific advisory committees for the 2022 – 2026 Council term are subject to the approval of the incoming Council.

### **Statutory Committees**

Statutory committees are required under legislation and/or Provincial/ Regional guidelines. The Town of Pelham's proposed statutory committees are guided by the *Planning Act, 1990*, *Public Libraries Act, 1990*, *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program

initiated through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Save and except the Livestock Valuer and Poundkeeper, statutory committees shall report to Council on their activities through meeting minutes and/or a delegation.

Staff propose that membership to statutory committees continue to be appointed by Council via by-law. Where the statutory committee is comprised on inter-municipal membership, Council shall appoint only the Town of Pelham representative(s). Statutory committees shall be governed by their approved terms of reference, their specific statute and/or the Procedural By-law; where procedures conflict, the specific statute shall prevail. Statutory committees shall continue to run with the term of Council.

Staff recommend re-categorizing the committees of: Committee of Adjustment, Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, Lincoln Pelham Union Public Library and Livestock Valuer and Poundkeeper as statutory committees.

### **Working Groups**

Staff recommend the establishment of Working Groups to facilitate or execute a project, event or task. More specifically, such Working Groups, when and as required, should have terms of reference be initiated by the lead department director and approved by the Chief Administrative Officer. This is in-keeping with their operational/project orientation and general lack of politicization. Membership can include Member(s) of Council, residents, stakeholders and/or field experts of the Town of Pelham. A Town staff liaison from the lead department shall be required to attend all meetings.

It is anticipated that most Working Group members would be appointed to two year terms, which are renewable. This would address the turnover experienced by many current Town Committees, where a number of residents have been most kind to volunteer their time and services, however do not necessarily want to make a four year commitment.

Working Groups would be exempt from the provisions of the Procedural By-law. Rather, they would have structural and administrative flexibility. Primarily comprised of volunteers, Working Groups would not be required to send their minutes to Council for information, as they are not providing advice. This would address the concern raised by some current volunteers that they do not want to be part of "Town bureaucracy".

An ancillary benefit is that this exemption will alleviate a significant number of council meeting agenda pages. Working Groups would be able to work on special projects, events and tasks which benefit the community on one-off, as needed

basis. This structure improves the overall functionality of the group through the implementation of a streamlined approach.

Staff recognize the importance of accountability and transparency for all committees and groups. Working Group meetings shall be required to be open to the public. Additionally, volunteer working group members shall be governed and subject to the Town's Code of Conduct.

Staff recommend committees such as: Pelham Summerfest Committee, Pelham Thursday Night Experience Committee and MCC User Group Committee operate as Working Groups. The establishment of Working Groups for the 2022 – 2026 Council term would proceed at the beginning of the new term of Council, at the discretion of the lead department head and Chief Administrative Officer.

### **Pitfalls in the Current System**

#### *Time Commitment*

The time commitment of Members of Council and advisory committee members over the four (4) year term is significant. The Clerk's department receives numerous resignations from advisory committee members throughout the four (4) year term, occasionally resulting in a deficiency in membership requirements. A good example of this is the Utility Sustainability Advisory Committee which hasn't met in more than two years as it has been unable to achieve quorum.

Advisory committees that no longer meet the membership requirement as prescribed in the approved terms of reference must temporarily cease until membership has been filled. This is abundantly difficult for committees such as the Summerfest Committee which must continue to operate to successfully deliver the annual event.

It is anticipated that lessening the time commitment of Working Group members (i.e. Summerfest Committee) to a two (2) year term will increase volunteerism and encourage positive membership cycles which will bring fresh ideas and perspectives to the groups.

The establishment of volunteer working groups will make the attendance of Members of Council optional for such groups. Members of Council may choose to dedicate their time where they deem fit. This should help promote a work life balance for Members of Council.

#### *Procedural Issues*

Advisory committees exist to provide advice and guidance to Council. This is not practical for each existing committee. For example, the MCC User Groups

Committee meets to schedule upcoming events and ice time. They do not have information to report to Council. Additionally, the Summerfest Committee meets to facilitate and execute the annual Summerfest event. Although they periodically provide updates to Council, this is not presented as advice or guidance. It shall be noted that Working Groups are not precluded from providing Council with updates or appearing as delegates.

Council and advisory committees currently function within a framework of rules and procedures as prescribed by the Procedural By-law. This includes, but is not limited to abiding by the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, 1990*. When a member of an advisory committee has a conflict of interest, they are to declare it and remove themselves from consideration on the topic. This requirement is particularly difficult for committees such as the MCC User Groups Committee and Summerfest Committee. For example, such committees are comprised of stakeholders who technically may have a pecuniary interest in the matter.

Advisory committee members have routinely expressed the desire to waive the requirements of strictly following parliamentary rules and procedures. Staff recognize that parliamentary procedure is not practical for committees that operate to execute a project, event or task. There is really no choice for Statutory Committees, and Advisory Committees also require structure, but the Town can likely offer freedom from procedural rules to Working Groups.

### **eSCRIBE Board Manager Software**

Beginning in the 2022–2026 term, staff will be utilizing the eSCRIBE board manager module to allow users to easily manage and publish committee names, member details, appointments, vacancies and applications through a unified public interface.

The board manager module will streamline administrative tasks, improving the experience of the staff and end users. Applicants will be able to apply directly online and easily access information such as vacancies, membership details and terms of references online in one convenient location. Additionally, residents can submit their application to multiple committees at one time.

Staff are hopeful the user friendly and expedient interface will increase committee participation.

This module will be utilized for both advisory committees and statutory committees.

### **Conclusion**

This recommendation is a logical step in the evolution of the Town's governance structure. In reality, advisory committees such as the Pelham Summerfest

Committee, MCC User Groups Committee and Pelham Arts Advisory Committee never functioned as an advisory committee in the traditional sense. The addition of a proposed volunteer working group structure will address the administrative inefficiencies and recommendations of current committee members. The addition of a statutory committee category will assist in identifying committees required by legislation and/or Provincial/ Regional guidelines.

The changes recommended in this report are intended to take effect with the 2022-2026 Council term. In the interim, staff recommend Council direct the Clerk's department and lead department directors to draft terms of reference in accordance with the proposed new advisory, statutory and volunteer working group structure for the up-coming term of Council. Starting this process now will allow the establishment and recruitment of such committees to begin promptly following the beginning of the new term of Council. If Council does not direct staff to initiate this work now, it will likely defer the establishment and recruitment of committees until mid-2023.

#### **Financial Considerations:**

There are no direct costs associated with this report.

#### **Alternatives Reviewed:**

Council can determine to continue with the status quo or defer consideration of the proposed committee structures to the next term of Council.

#### **Strategic Plan Relationship: Build Strong Communities and Cultural Assets**

Restructuring how advisory committee are organized will build stronger communities and enhance the Town's events and festivals by promoting volunteerism and input. The recommendations in this report were derived from the input of current committee members and the observations of Town staff representatives.

#### **Consultation:**

Senior Leadership Team

#### **Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:**

Draft Template of the 2022-2026 Terms of Reference – Advisory/ Statutory Committees

Draft Template of the 2022-2026 Terms of Reference – Volunteer Working Groups

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