

7

AMENDMENT TO YORK REGION ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, April 3, 2008, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council approve the following amendment to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference as outlined in *Council Attachment 1*:

“5.4 Qualifications

- (a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, members of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee shall be qualified electors of York Region pursuant to the *Municipal Elections Act*.
- (b) Members who are appointed to the Committee pursuant to section 5.1(d) are not required to reside within York Region provided they represent an organization in York Region that provides services to York Region residents with disabilities.
- (c) A regional employee would not qualify to be a member of the YRAAC.”

2. PURPOSE

Revised Terms of Reference for York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

The purpose of this report is to present an amendment to the Terms of Reference for the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC) as outlined in *Council Attachment 1*.

3. BACKGROUND

Requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) includes specific requirements for all municipalities, including York Region. One key requirement is the development of an annual accessibility plan. Under the ODA, the annual accessibility plan must address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in municipal by-laws, policies, practices, services and facilities. The ODA also requires that the accessibility plan is also developed in consultation with municipal accessibility advisory committees, which are comprised of a majority of persons with disabilities. Since the enactment of the ODA, the Region has worked with the YRAAC to develop and implement four accessibility plans.

The current YRAAC was appointed in March, 2007, and will complete their term in 2010, concurrent with the term of Regional Council. The YRAAC is currently comprised of eight citizen members and three members of Regional Council, plus the Regional Chair as an ex-officio member, including: Regional Councillor, Danny Wheeler (Chair); Wilf Morley (Vice-Chair); Janice Cameron, Margaret Gaukel, Cindy Gorlewski, Beverley Hall, Kirsten Hill, Diane Humeniuk, Trish Robichaud, and Regional Councillors, John Taylor and Vito Spatafora.

York Region's recruitment and appointment process for its Accessibility Advisory Committee has proven to be very successful and has been promoted as a best practice and model, endorsed by the Province. The members of the current YRAAC include people who have different types of disabilities, and backgrounds and who come from across the Region, offering a variety of perspectives. Since the proclamation of the ODA, members of the YRAAC have played an integral role in the success of the Region's accessibility planning process.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The current Terms of Reference for the YRAAC were developed and approved by Regional Council on October 19, 2006 through the adoption of Clause No. 1 of Report No. 2. This report makes a recommendation for an amendment to the terms of reference based on an area identified for improvement since approval from Regional Council in 2006.

4.1 AMENDMENT TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

Composition and Size

Currently, Accessibility Advisory Committees (AACs) are legislatively required under the ODA to include a majority of persons with disabilities. The YRAAC Terms of Reference also supports membership from organizations representing people with

disabilities that provide services to residents in York Region and citizen members who may not have a disability but have a level of expertise or interest.

According to the YRAAC Terms of Reference all members must be qualified electors of York Region pursuant to the *Municipal Elections Act*. While York Region's recruitment of AAC members has been extremely successful generally there has however, been difficulty in recruiting members with cognitive disabilities. This is an area that must be understood in order to effectively address future requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Recommendation

To promote the future involvement and broader representation of disability types on the YRAAC, it is recommended that persons representing organizations in York Region that provide services to York Region residents with disabilities, that may not be qualified York Region electors, be allowed to apply for membership on the YRAAC.

Section 5.4 of the YRAAC Terms of Reference would be amended as follows:

"5.4 Qualifications

- (a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, members of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee shall be qualified electors of York Region pursuant to the *Municipal Elections Act*.
- (b) Members who are appointed to the Committee pursuant to section 5.1(d) are not required to reside within York Region provided they represent an organization in York Region that provides services to York Region residents with disabilities.
- (c) A regional employee would not qualify to be a member of the YRAAC."

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no costs associated with this minor change to the Terms of Reference.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The YRAAC and regional staff have established strong relationships and valuable networks with their counterparts in the local municipalities. Opportunities to share information and learn from one another will be continued and improved by increasing opportunities for representation from a part of the community of persons with disabilities that is more difficult to reach.

7. CONCLUSION

For the past four years, the YRAAC has provided valuable advice on the Region's Accessibility Plans. They have been actively involved in the development and implementation of these plans, by taking part in focus groups, advising Council and staff on barriers to our facilities and ways to remove them, and providing input on our policies and practices.

This amendment to the YRAAC Terms of Reference will expand the Region's future ability to include members of the YRAAC that reflect the diversity of York Region residents and that are inclusive of a broader range of disabilities.

For more information on this report, please contact Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Director of Policy and Program Support Services at Extension 2150.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)