



January 26, 2023

Rick O'Connor  
City Solicitor and Clerk  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Ave West  
Ottawa, ON  
K1P 1J1

Dear Mr. O'Connor,

New leadership at the City of Ottawa provides an important opportunity to set a higher standard of public engagement and collaboration in making public policy.

Council's recent direction to report back with recommendations on governance matters relating to advisory bodies strikes us as an excellent opportunity to contribute to Council's capacity for well-informed decision-making. Please consider the following recommendations, as a matter of general practice:

- Ensure that all advisory bodies convene at least quarterly, and at other times; as appropriate. Council liaisons should attend all meetings, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- Ensure that the agenda, minutes of the prior meeting, and supporting documentation are circulated to advisory body members on a timely basis and no less than 5 business days in advance of the next meeting.
- Ensure that meeting minutes include a substantive summary of topic discussions; a record of any decisions; a list of outstanding items and/or queries to staff for follow up; as well as pertinent documents from the previous meeting.
- To increase public awareness of the advisory body meetings, include public advisories of meeting agendas in the City's weekly notice of upcoming meetings at City Hall.
- Permit advisory bodies to receive input from the public as they deem advisable, and to organize joint meetings with other advisory groups when topics for discussion overlap.
- Ensure that advisory bodies receive briefings from staff in a timely manner, that is, well before staff reports are finalized and put on a Committee's agenda. This is particularly important for the budget process.
- As future advisory body meetings are likely to be held online or hybrid, ensure that livestream and recorded meetings are posted on the City's YouTube channel.

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- Circulate the minutes of advisory body meetings to the Clerk of the related committee for distribution to Committee members, and make the minutes accessible to the general public.
- Request that staff reports include a section titled “Advice from XX Advisory Committee” when the advisory committee has made a recommendation.
- Ensure that advisory groups have the administrative/organizational support needed to do what they are meant to do.

When forming advisory groups, consider including members affiliated with **organizations** bringing relevant local expertise, in addition to individuals from the general public and individual specialists such as academics associated with the sector. Organizations, including unions, BIAs, relevant industry associations, community and issue-based groups, etc. provide an advisory body with broad representation and important organizational memory. Consider as well staggering the terms within advisory groups, to enable greater continuity to their work.

We would be pleased to provide any additional justification or comment on the above, at your convenience. The POP coalition believes that the City’s advisory committees are an important part of civic engagement and an avenue for the community to work with the City.

Sincerely,

Daniel Buckles

On behalf of the Peoples Official Plan

The Peoples Official Plan (POP) is a coalition of organizations focused on bringing greater urgency and ambition on climate and social justice issues to the implementation of Ottawa’s Official Plan.

CC. Mayor Sutcliffe, Councillors,