



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 17-165 **Version:** 1 **Name:**
Type: Staff Report **Status:** Passed
File created: 4/19/2017 **In control:** Council
On agenda: 4/24/2017 **Final action:** 4/24/2017
Title: Council Liaison Role for Community Groups, Staff Report ADM-17-009
Sponsors:
Indexes:
Code sections:
Attachments: 1. Summary of Responses from Community Groups, 2. Staff Report ADM-17-005

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
4/24/2017	1	Council	approved	Pass

REQUEST FOR DECISION

DATE: April 19, 2017 Report No. ADM-17-009
TO: Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer
FROM: Anja Nurvo, Director of Corporate Services
SUBJECT:
Council Liaison Role for Community Groups

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. receive Staff Report ADM-17-009 for information;
2. determine whether a Council Liaison appointment is to be made to the Esquimalt Lantern Festival Society, Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society and the Esquimalt Farmers Market Society; and
3. direct that no revisions are required to existing Council Policies dealing with the role of the Council Liaison to committees.

RELEVANT POLICY:

Council Policy ADMIN-45 Operational Guidelines for Council Committees and Commissions
Council Policy ADMIN-32 Local Grants

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:

Build a vibrant and sustainable arts, culture and heritage community - Ensure that community events support strategic objectives
Resilient and Diverse Economy - Review Township policies and bylaws to ensure efficient processes,

and Promote and encourage a diverse range of community events

BACKGROUND:

At the Committee of the Whole (COTW) meeting held on March 13, 2017, Council reviewed Staff Report ADM-17-005 regarding the role of the Council Liaison to community organizations. A copy of Staff Report ADM-17-005 is attached for Council's reference.

In Staff Report ADM-17-005, staff recommended that no revisions were required to the existing Council Policies to clarify the role of the Council Liaison to committees and community organizations. Staff also recommended that staff would ensure that the appropriate role of the Council Liaison to committees is adequately reviewed at the annual committee orientation and that letters to community organizations advising of Council Liaison appointments include a copy of the Council Policies as well as a clause clarifying the role of the Council Liaison.

At the COTW meeting, Council determined that clarity was required regarding the group's expectations of the Council Liaison role, and directed that staff seek community group input regarding the value and role the Council Liaison to the group and whether attendance at the group's meetings was an expectation. Staff's report also advised that there were currently eight community groups receiving local grant funding or in-kind support from the Township, and that five of these had a Council-appointed Council Liaison position and three did not. Council determined that it was not able to consider appointment of a Council Liaison to the three community groups that currently did not have one until the community groups' input into the Council Liaison role was reviewed.

Following the COTW meeting, staff contacted all of the eight community groups and requested that they provide answers to staff relating to the Council Liaison role. Of the eight groups, seven responded. Only the Esquimalt Lantern Festival did not provide a response. A summary of the responses to the questions is attached.

Based on the answers provided from the community groups regarding the role of the Council Liaison, it is clear that there is a difference of opinion on the appropriate role of the Council Liaison and its importance to the group, whether the group expects the Council Liaison to attend each meeting, and whether the group expects the Council Liaison to advocate on behalf of the group before Council. In staff's opinion, these issues and the appropriate role of the Council Liaison are adequately addressed in the existing Council Policies.

Three of the community groups currently do not have a Council Liaison appointment. These are: Esquimalt Lantern Festival Society (local grant \$8,000); Victoria Nikkei Society (local grant \$1,000); and Esquimalt Farmers Market Society (local grant \$12,000). Esquimalt Lantern Festival Society did not respond to the questionnaire. Of the others, one responded that they would like to have a Council Liaison and one was not sure if it was needed. Both responding groups thought advocacy was one of the main roles, and that it was not necessary for the Council Liaison to attend every meeting.

Accordingly, staff recommends that no revisions to the existing Policies are made, but that the role of the Council Liaison be addressed in the initial correspondence to the community groups advising of the appointment. Whether the Council Liaison should attend each meeting or just when requested to do so by the group, is a practical consideration that should be left to the particular group to determine its needs at the time. It is also important to clarify to all of the groups that the role of the Council Liaison is to improve communication with Council and provide relevant impartial information relating to Council policies, strategic priorities and budget considerations when appropriate. The role does not

include advocating for the group in matters before Council; that is the role of the chair and executive of the community organization.

ISSUES:

1. Rationale for Selected Option

In staff's opinion, the existing Council Policies adequately set out the appropriate role of the Council Liaison appointment to various committees, commissions and boards. These same Policies are also applicable to community groups receiving local grants or in-kind support from the Township for which Council may, in its discretion, appoint a Council Liaison. Whether the Council Liaison should attend each meeting of the community group or attend only when requested to do so, is a matter that should be left to the community group to determine based on its needs at the time.

2. Organizational Implications

There are no organizational implications.

3. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

4. Sustainability & Environmental Implications

There are no sustainability or environmental implications.

5. Communication & Engagement

Staff will ensure that the community groups are advised of Council Liaison appointments and provided with a copy of the relevant Council Policies. In addition, the letters to the groups will set out the appropriate role of the Council Liaison for clarification around the groups' expectations for this role.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. That Council:

- 1) receive Staff Report ADM-17-009 for information;
- 2) determine whether a Council Liaison appointment is to be made to the Esquimalt Lantern Festival Society, Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society and the Esquimalt Farmers Market Society; and
- 3) direct that no revisions are required to existing Council Policies dealing with the role of the Council Liaison to committees.

2. That Council direct staff to prepare revisions to existing Council Policies dealing with the role of the Council Liaison to community groups for Council's review.

3. That Council refer this matter back to staff for further information.