

DATE: August 2, 2023

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development

SUBJECT: Advisory Committee on Development Design – 2023 Membership

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council APPROVES the dissolution of the Advisory Committee on Development Design as outlined in the report dated August 2, 2023, from the Director of Planning and Development titled “Advisory Committee on Development Design – 2023 Membership.”

PURPOSE:

For Council consideration.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of the Advisory Committee on Development Design (ACDD) is to advise Mayor, Council, and City Staff on matters respecting policies and guidelines affecting the City’s physical environment, and to review and provide recommendations regarding Development Permit and Design Review applications. The ACDD endeavors to promote urban design and well-planned development in the City while giving due regard to public health, safety, convenience, climate, accessibility, and aesthetics, in respect of not only proposed development but also the surrounding development and built environment. The Committee’s role is restricted by the scope of the Development Permit application under review. Recommendations or suggestions are limited to the exterior form and character of the proposed development.

Composition

The Committee’s Terms of Reference allow a maximum of nine (9) public members to be appointed by Council. All annual appointments are for a term of up to two years and a member may not serve longer than six (6) consecutive years. The Committee’s Terms of Reference states that public membership will be comprised of the following represented categories:

- Architecture or Design Representative;
- Northern Regional Construction Association;
- Housing Industry Representative from the Canadian Home Builders Association of Northern BC;
- Professional Engineer;
- Landscape Professional;
- Registered Professional Planner;
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Representative;

- Prince George Council of Seniors;
- Prince George Advisory Committee on Accessibility; and
- Public at Large.

The Committee's Terms of Reference states that Council may fill a vacancy on the Committee by appointing additional applicant(s) from other representative categories.

Membership & Quorum

In 2022, committee membership included representation from the following categories as appointed by Council:

- 2 Professional Engineers;
- Design Representative;
- Northern Regional Construction Association;
- Prince George Advisory Committee on Accessibility Representative; and
- Public at Large.

The Committee scheduled seven (7) meetings in 2022. Only two (2) of the seven (7) meetings reviewed Development Permit applications. One meeting was the inaugural meeting for administrative purposes, and four committee meetings were cancelled due to a lack of quorum.

2023 membership currently includes one member previously appointed by Council representing the Professional Engineer category and one member appointed from the Advisory Committee on Accessibility. During the 2023 recruitment process, only one application was received representing the public at large.

DISCUSSION:

Administration has been unable to satisfactorily fill vacancies and meet quorum in order to operate in 2023. Administration recognizes that membership of the ACDD is intended to provide a broad cross-representation of all eligible member categories to provide fulsome advice on matters referred to the committee.

Limited Authority

The ACDD is intended to advise Mayor and Council, and City Staff on the quality of design of the built environment in the City, and specifically to provide suggestions and recommendations to improve the design quality of the development projects being reviewed by the City. Recommendations of the Committee are advisory only; the Committee does not have the authority to require amendments, make policy, or approve projects.

Should the Committee be dissolved, City Staff will rely on City bylaws, policies, and guidelines when reviewing development proposals. Through development permit guidelines, the City may ensure that all new development is compatible with existing neighbourhoods, promotes community goals, reflects local identity, aligns with the design guidelines and recommendations within Neighbourhood and Area Plans, and enhances the built environment (OCP Policy 8.2.10).

Quorum

All acts and matters that come before the Committee must be done and decided by a majority of the members present at a duly constituted meeting with quorum present. Quorum is currently determined by 50% plus one of the appointed members annually. Due to low membership and common conflicts of interest caused by a committee member's involvement in a project, quorum has frequently not been attainable in recent years.

As previously mentioned, the ACDD's Terms of Reference allow a maximum of nine (9) public members to be appointed by Council requiring a minimum of five (5) members to satisfy quorum requirements. 2023 membership currently includes one (1) member previously appointed by Council representing the Professional Engineer category and one (1) member appointed from the Advisory Committee on Accessibility. During the 2023 recruitment process, only one (1) application was received representing the public at large.

As Administration has been unable to fill vacancies and meet quorum, 2023 membership has not been established. Since a broad cross-representation of all eligible member categories has become increasingly challenging over recent years and the ACDD is no longer providing value, Administration supports dissolution of the ACDD.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The ACDD's goals and purpose align with Council's strategic priorities to collaborate with partners to enhance the quality of life in Prince George, to advance progress in the downtown, and to celebrate the success of citizens and community partners in promoting civic pride through development design.

Should Council approve the dissolution of the ACDD, Administration will continue to carry forward Council's strategic priorities when reviewing development proposals relying upon City bylaws, policies, and guidelines.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the dissolution
2. Refuse the dissolution
3. Defer or otherwise deal with the ACDD

Administration recommends that Council approves the dissolution of the ACDD.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

That Council approves the dissolution of the Advisory Committee on Development Design for the reasons outlined in this report.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development

PREPARED BY: Kali Holahan, Supervisor, Land Use Planning

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2023/08/16