
Subject: Stouffville Youth Advisory Working Group – Terms of Reference

Staff Report No. CS-006-24

Commission: Community Services Commission

Date: June 5, 2024

Recommendation:

- 1) That Council adopt the Stouffville Youth Advisory Working Group Terms of Reference, as outlined in Attachment 1.
- 2) That Council authorize Staff to proceed with the implementation of a Youth Advisory Working Group, with promotion of the Working Group and recruitment beginning in August 2024.
- 3) That Council delegate authority to the Commissioner of Community Services to oversee the Working Group, and to work in partnership with other Commissions who may have Town business or projects relevant to youth, both from an advisory perspective and an educational perspective.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to outline the Stouffville Youth Advisory Working Group Terms of Reference and to seek approval from Council to proceed with the implementation of a Youth Advisory Working Group.

2. Executive Summary:

In February 2024, staff were asked to establish a Terms of Reference for a Youth Council. A comprehensive review of other Municipal Youth Councils and Advisory Committees was undertaken, including a review of best practices. Council is being asked to adopt the attached Stouffville Youth Advisory Working Group Terms of Reference, as established by staff in the Community Services Commission, Recreation Division.

3. Background:

At the February 7, 2024, Council Meeting, recognizing that the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville does not currently have a formal mechanism for youth to provide their input regarding initiatives to enhance youth opportunities within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Council directed staff to develop Terms of Reference for the creation of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Youth Council. The Terms of Reference will include (but not be limited to), mandate, application process, selection committee and cost.

Staff were asked to report back by the end of Q2 2024.

4. Analysis and Options:

Staff undertook a review of other Municipal Youth Councils and Advisory Committees, including research related to best practices and how best to engage youth. Recognizing that a formal *Committee of Council* may be intimidating for youth and limit their involvement, staff have opted to proceed with a less formal *Working Group* model.

While much of the Municipality's youth programming occurs within the Community Services Commission, an opportunity also exists for the Youth Advisory Working Group to work with departments across the Municipality to provide advice and input on issues of concern to youth. The Youth Advisory Working Group will act as an advocate to provide new ideas and views to staff with respect to youth programs, initiatives, plans and strategic direction, and projects within the Town; members may also be tasked with evaluating and promoting current initiatives.

As part of the Youth Advisory Working Group's regular meeting schedule, on a rotational basis, each Commission within the Municipality will be asked to provide updates and an overview of departmental functions, as they relate to youth, to help educate members, and improve civic engagement and understanding. Highlighting career opportunities that exist in a Municipal environment will also be encouraged.

From time to time, complementary organizations may be asked to present and/or assist the Working Group as well.

The attached Terms of Reference help to formalize the Working Group's mandate, membership make-up, the application process, and responsibilities and expectations – both of members and Town staff.

It is worth noting that a Whitchurch-Stouffville Youth Council was in place for several years, until approximately June 2018. As the Municipality has grown considerably, this initiative will help Town staff to connect directly with youth in the community.

Recommendation

Staff recommend that Council adopt the Stouffville Youth Advisory Working Group Terms of Reference, as outlined in Attachment 1, and that Staff proceed with the implementation of the Working Group, including promotion and recruitment of suitable Working Group Members.

Staff recommend that Council authorize the Commissioner of Community Services to oversee the Working Group and work in partnership with other Commissions, who may have Town business or projects relevant to youth, both from an advisory perspective and an educational perspective.

5. Financial Implications:

In the early stages of the Working Group, budget implications should be minimal. Once the Working Group is established, staff can help guide working group members, based on funds that are available for 2024 programming and initiatives. In future years, and should the Working Group choose to have a large involvement and presence in special events and youth-related activities, funds may need to be requested in future budget submissions for supplies and staff time/support; this will be noted during the budget process.

6. Alignment with Strategic Plan:

1. A Town that Grows
A Town that grows in support of complete communities
2. An Engaging Town
Increase Community Engagement & Outreach
3. Good Governance
Provide Good Governance

7. Attachments:

1. Stouffville Youth Advisory Working Group – Terms of Reference

8. Related Reports:

None

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For further information on this report, please contact the Department Head:

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