

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Advisory committee name:	Environmental Advisory Committee
Reporting to:	Committee of the Whole
Date of formation:	Formed February 22, 2016
Meeting frequency:	Minimum of 3 times per year
Lead staff:	Brian Head, Manager of Parks & Open Spaces Department of Public Works
Other staff liaison:	Municipal Arborist*
*permanent members	Others as deemed necessary as per Section 4.2.1
Council member:	Councillor Froude Deputy Mayor Sheilagh O’Leary

2. PURPOSE

The Environmental Advisory Committee provides information and advice to the Committee of the Whole on environmental issues that relate to City policies, programs or services, as referred by Council or committees of Council, or as initiated by the Committee.

Specifically, the Committee will:

- Provide recommendations and advice respecting the identification and implementation of programs, approaches or policies relating to the protection, sustainability and enhancement of natural resources and systems within the City.
- Support and promote an increased consciousness of the environment and sustainability practices within the City.
- Provide a forum for dialogue between the environmental sector and the City on matters relevant to both parties.

Advisory committee recommendations to the Committee of the Whole will occur in the manner defined by these terms of reference to best support City Policy. The advisory committee has no decision making authority and is advisory only. The purpose of the Environmental Advisory Committee in relation to specific City policies, plans and strategies is as follows:

Advisory Committee Relationship to Strategic Plan:

- Neighbourhoods build our City - Promote a safe and secure city, develop parks and places for people
- A Culture of Cooperation - Improve multi-level government relations, develop improved inter-regional municipal relations
- A City for all seasons – development a Winter City strategy, support a weather resilient city, incorporate *all weather* planning in City building and open space development
- Fiscally responsible – develop appropriate user fee policies,
- Responsive and progressive - Build social, environmental and demographic factors into policy-making

Applicable Legislation/City Bylaws:

- The Development Regulations
- City of St. John's Act

Other City Plans, Guides or Strategies:

- St. John's Urban Forest Management Master Plan 2006
- A Watershed Management Plan, St. John's Regional Water Supply Study, 1996
- Envision St. John's (draft) Municipal Plan, 2014
- Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan, 2014
- Significant Waterways and Wetlands Study (1993)
- City of St. John's Sustainability Plan

Other Distinct Deliverables and Considerations:

- Advising on ways to further public awareness and understanding of environmental and sustainability matters as they relate to the City of St. John's.
- Liaising with and facilitating ongoing dialogue among stakeholders (e.g., sectoral groups, City Council, the Provincial Government, and the Federal Government) on matters relevant to the environment.
- The Committee will be consulted on any City public engagement process where obtaining the perspective of the environmental sector is identified.
- Review of development applications as referred to it by Council or the Committee of the Whole.
- The implementation of the St. John's Urban Forest Management Master Plan 2006 and municipal corporate policies and plans which may affect the urban forest and its components. Provide an annual update on the state of the urban forest and the City's tree program.

3. MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION

3.1 Composition

The Advisory Committee will be comprised of a minimum of 9-11 total members from the following stakeholder groups:

3.1.1 Public Members

Committee Chair

Advisory committees are chaired by members of the public. One advisory committee member will be elected as chair by the committee every two years. The public member chairing a committee will have responsibility for ensuring the committee carries out its work as per the terms of reference.

Public Members

The Committee will be comprised of no more than 2 residents serving as public members. Public members are volunteers and will receive no compensation for participation. Preference will be given to residents of St. John's.

Organizations

The Committee will be comprised of no more than 6 representatives from a broad range of environmental stakeholders. (e.g., conservation authorities, energy utilities, community groups with a focus on the environment, conservation and/or sustainability). Additionally, 2 organizational representatives which represent expertise in the urban forestry sector.

Public Representation: In accordance with the Next Up! Program, at least one representative (public member, aged 19-35) will be appointed to each advisory committee. These representatives must be between the ages of 19-35.

Subcommittees: When deemed necessary, the Committee may strike a working committee or subcommittee to deal with specific issues or deliverables such as the review of development applications. Subcommittees must have at least one advisory committee member. Composition may also include other members of the public and organizational representatives. Subcommittees shall meet as an independent group, reporting to the advisory committee on specified meeting dates, or as deemed necessary by the committee Chair or Lead Staff.

3.1.2 Staff and Council Members (Ex-Officio Members)

Lead Staff

A Lead Staff will be appointed to the advisory committee by the appropriate City executive or senior management. Other staff support/attendance may be requested by the Lead Staff where required.

City Clerk

The City Clerk will have representation on each advisory committee.

Council

Each advisory committee will have one council representative acting as advisory committee spokesperson/ champion.

3.2 Length of Term

Public Members

Unless otherwise indicated, the advisory committee term of appointment is two years. Recognizing the value of experience and the need for continuity, incumbents who are willing to seek reappointment may signify their intent to serve an additional two year term, for a total of four years. In some cases members may be encouraged to provide guidance, expertise and attend in a bridging capacity following the end of their term.

Organizations

The role of an organization will depend on its relationship with the Committee and ongoing ability to represent interests of a stakeholder group relevant to the purpose of the advisory committee. Where appropriate organizations will be required to alternate appointed representatives following the completion of a two two-year term.

Lead Staff

A review of Lead Staff role will occur every four years as part of the advisory committee review.

Cooling-off Period (Former City Staff and Council)

There will be a cooling-off period of two years for Council and Staff once they are no longer associated with the City. Setting term lengths with a cooling-off period will promote gradual turnover, ensuring a constant balance between new members and former staff or council.

Additional Considerations:

- Public members may not serve on more than one advisory committee at a given time.
- Midterm Appointments: When an appointment is made which does not coincide with the beginning of a term (i.e. to fill vacancy) the partial term (i.e. less than two years) shall not count towards the maximum length of service or number of terms on the Committee for the appointee.
- Unless otherwise expressed in this Terms of Reference, the limit on length of advisory committee membership for any public member is two two-year terms.

Exceptions to the above terms are as follows: when an insufficient number of applications have been received; if a particular area of expertise is indispensable and there are no other suitable replacements; if the advisory committee would suffer from a lack of continuity (i.e. more than half of all members are replaced at once); if directly related to the advisory committee's purpose as defined in its Terms of Reference.

4. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTING

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

As a municipal advisory body, Advisory Committee roles include:

- Advising and making recommendations to the Committee of the Whole, in a manner that will support City policy matters relevant to the committee's defined purpose.
- Providing resident and organizational based expertise.
- Working within given resources.

Shared Member Responsibilities

Conduct

Members shall strive to serve the public interest by upholding Federal, Provincial and Municipal laws and policies. Advisory committee members are to be transparent in their duties to promote public confidence. Members are to respect the rights and opinions of other committee members.

Preparation

Meeting agenda and accompanying materials will be circulated electronically one week prior to all meetings; members are expected to review all distributed materials prior to meetings. Alternate material distribution methods to be made available upon request.

Agendas

- The Public Works Department will provide advice and guidance to committee on areas needing their involvement and perspective – focus and work of committee should dictate schedule of meetings.
- Agendas to require focus with clear parameters for content and alignment with terms of reference/purpose.
- Agendas will be finalized one week before advisory committee meetings.
- Items and accompanying material that are received after the agenda has been prepared and distributed (but prior to the meeting) will be moved to the following meeting's agenda at the discretion of the City Clerk.
- All public members are to submit potential agenda items and related material to the Committee Chair and Lead Staff person for consideration.

Attendance and Participation

Active participation in advisory committee meetings is expected of all public members. "Active participation" may refer to both meeting attendance and/or engagement. An effort should be made to attend meetings in person or remotely. Members who do not actively participate in more than 3 consecutive meetings without justified absence may be retired from the committee at the discretion of the City Clerk.

Committee members who wish to request a leave of absence for an extended period of time (3+ months) may submit such a request to the City Clerk. Previously submitted applications may be used to fill temporary vacancies created by approved leaves of absence.

Voting

Council members and individuals from City Staff are ex-officio and therefore non-voting.

4.2 Member Roles and Responsibilities

4.2.1 City Staff

Lead Staff

- To act as a liaison between the committee and the City; linking across departments on issues relevant to committee work.
- Ensure the committee is informed about City policy, procedure and available resources in reference to specific agenda items, and provide procedural and/or technical advice to assist the committee where appropriate.
- Request additional staff support/attendance as needed.
- To develop agendas in cooperation with the Chair and City Clerk's Office for distribution.
- Incorporate input from the advisory committee into ongoing City work where appropriate (e.g. projects, staff updates, publications).

Other Staff Liaison

- The work of Other Staff Liaisons intersects the purpose of the advisory committee and therefore they may be required to participate.

City Clerk

- To be responsible for legislative and governance functions related to advisory committee operation, establishment, review, and term amendments. This includes leading or supporting day-to-day committee activities such as the co-ordination of meeting schedules and the external/internal distribution/posting of advisory committee agendas and reporting forms (i.e. meeting notes/minutes).
- Facilitate and support the recruitment and appointment process through assisting in the development of "Notice of Vacancy" contents while ensuring all relevant forms and supporting documentation are completed and received.
- In adherence with the terms of reference, the Office of City Clerk and Lead staff will oversee committee selection with input from relevant departments.
- The Office of the City Clerk will work with Lead Staff members to ensure new members receive orientation.

4.2.2 Public Members

Chair

- The presiding officer of an advisory committee will be referred to as "Chair." Advisory committees shall elect, from among their voting members, a Chair at the end of the prior chair's term. An advisory committee member shall not serve as a Chair for more than four consecutive years except in extenuating circumstances (see Term Limits).
- Uphold advisory committee processes and functions in accordance with all terms presented, maintaining productivity and focus. This includes ensuring committee members' conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- If appropriate, with support from the City Clerk and Staff Lead, the Chair will help build and coordinate a work plan for the advisory committee.
- Prepare and submit agenda items and accompanying materials to the City Clerk (i.e. act as a conduit for all communications between public members and the City Clerk).
- Where appropriate, support the Lead Staff and/or City Clerk in fulfilling committee requirements related to reporting processes (annual presentations, written reports, FAQ's etc.).
- Assist in the development of content for Notice of Vacancy documents.
- Review advisory committee terms of reference with City Clerk and Staff Lead at the end of each term and be prepared to propose amendments as needed.

Public Members

Public members are expected to advise City decision making; applying personal skills, knowledge and experience in carrying out functions commensurate with the defined purpose of the committee. Roles to include: active participation in committee meetings; electing a Chair; representing select committee interests in the community, and engaging with residents and experts when appropriate.

Organizations

In addition to the responsibilities held by all public members, organizational members will also be conduits to/from their respective organizations. As such they will be expected to provide insight on behalf of organizational stakeholders, and update their members on the work of the committee.

4.2.3 Council

Council members have a focused role. One council representative will sit on each advisory committee as the Advisory Committee Champion. In accordance with the role of advisory committees (i.e. to advise council through Committee of the Whole meetings), and to promote and enhance the committee's advisory function, council representatives will be encouraged to attend meetings as observers, and to act as a liaison between the committee and council.

In cases where an item of committee business (as detailed in a given meeting agenda) would benefit from having more than one council representative attend, it will be the responsibility of the Chair and/or Lead Staff to inform council.

4.3 Reporting

The Environmental Advisory Committee shall report through the Committee of the Whole; however, depending on the issue, reports may be directed to another committee where appropriate.

Standardized Reporting Process:

The advisory committee Lead Staff, Committee Chair and City Clerk will work to complete a report for consideration at Committee of the Whole.

Notes:

- Council to be kept informed of committee activities through formal reporting and through the appointed Council Champion.
- Organizational representatives will be encouraged to report to (i.e. maintain open communication) with their respective organizations regarding committee work.
- A bi-annual Advisory Committee check-in will be held for all advisory committee members.

5. COMMITTEE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

5.1 Recruitment, Vacancies, and Applications

Recruitment practices will be consistent for all advisory committees. When new members are required a “Notice of Vacancy” will be prepared by the City Clerk and distributed through City communication channels. Additional communications opportunities may be identified by relevant departments/committee members. This document will include general information regarding committee purpose, the terms of reference and a link to the Advisory Committee Application Form.

A vacancy on an advisory committee occurs when a member resigns, vacates a position or when their resignation is requested by the advisory committee Chair. Vacancies may occur at: the date of resignation; the date the member ceases to be qualified; the date the committee Chair declares the position vacant due to lack of attendance or incapacitation.

All applicants must complete an Advisory Committee Application Form which may be downloaded from the City website, or obtained by visiting/calling Access 311. Applications will be made available in large print format upon request and may be submitted electronically (built in submission), via mail, by phone, or in person to the attention of the City Clerk’s Office.

5.2 Eligibility and Selection

Eligibility

Appointments to City of St. John’s advisory committees will be made providing adherence with the following eligibility requirements:

1. Preference will be given to residents of St. John’s. Exceptions may be made by the selecting body.
2. Organizational representatives must be based in or serve/do business within the City of St. John’s.
3. Organizational representatives are not required to be residents of St. John’s.

Commitment to Equity and Inclusiveness

The City of St. John’s is strongly committed to equity and inclusiveness. In selecting advisory committee members the City will aim to design processes that are transparent, accessible, free of discrimination, and seek to remove barriers.

Selection Criteria

In addition to eligibility requirements, an applicant’s specific skills and experience will be important factors in committee selection. While all who meet the Eligibility Requirements outlined above are encouraged to apply, applicants with demonstrated participation in groups or initiatives with goals relevant to an advisory committee’s purpose will be preferred. Some other considerations pertaining to general selection criteria include: past professional and volunteer experience, ability to perform required tasks, and complementary skills, or competencies possessed. Those who are selected to serve on City advisory committees will be notified by email. A committee handbook will be sent to new members.

6. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The City of St. John's recognizes that engagement between the City and its citizens is an essential component of an effective municipal government. The City views public engagement as a process – one that facilitates dialogue with the right people, using the right tools, at the right time on subject areas of mutual interest.

In accordance with the City of St. John's [Engage! Policy](#), the role of the Environmental Advisory Committee in the spectrum of engagement will fall within the realm of "consultation". This means that City advisory committees will provide a forum for the public to provide specific feedback on relevant City matters; helping to inform decision making. As such City of St. John's advisory committees will be based on the principles of commitment, accountability, clear and timely information, and inclusiveness.

Advisory committees are only one of the ways to engage with the City. Where applicable the City will consider the use of other tools to gather perspectives and input. For more information on public engagement in the City of St. John's or to find out how to get involved or learn about what's coming up, check out the engagement page on the City's website. You can also check out the City's [Engage! St. John's](#) online engagement platform and connect with us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

7. OTHER GOVERNANCE

7.1 Review of Terms

Taking into account recommendations from the Chair, the Committee of the Whole, the City Clerk, and Lead Staff the "Environmental Advisory Committee" will, at the first meeting of every year, review the terms of reference documents. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the operation and function of this committee is still aligned with its defined purpose. A review template will be used to maintain consistency. Through this review process, amendments to the TOR will be recommended to Council through the Committee of the Whole.

7.2 Meetings and Schedules

Advisory Committees are to formally meet no less than three times and no more than six times on an annual basis. The exact frequency of advisory committee meetings will be determined by the Chair, Lead Staff, and City Clerk.

Unless otherwise specified (generally one week prior to a meeting) advisory committee meetings shall be held at City Hall and shall be closed to the public.

A quorum for meetings is considered 50% + 1 member in attendance.

7.3 Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest refers to situations in which personal, occupational or financial considerations may affect or appear to affect the objectivity or fairness of decisions related to the committee activities. A conflict of interest may be real, potential or perceived in nature. Conflict of Interest may occur when a Committee member participates in discussion or decision-making about a matter which may financially benefit that Member or a member of his/her family, or someone with whom the Committee member has a close personal relationship, directly or indirectly, regardless of the size of the benefit.

In cases where the Committee agenda or Committee discussions present a conflict of interest for a member, that member is required to declare such conflict; to abstain from discussion; and remove himself/herself from the meeting room until the agenda item has been dealt with by the Committee.

Confidentiality:

All Committee members are required to refrain from the use or transmission of any confidential or privileged information while serving with the Environmental Advisory Committee.

Staff Liaison Name:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Chair Name:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

City Clerk Name:

Signature: _____

Date: _____