



## Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: October 8, 2025

Report Number: SRCFS.25.041

Department: Corporate and Financial Services

Division: Office of the Clerk

**Subject: SRCFS.25.041 - Committee Appointment Policy Options**

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### Purpose:

To seek Council's direction on the preferred Committee Appointment Policy option.

### Recommendation(s):

- a) That staff report SRCFS.25.041 be received;
- b) That Council direct the City Clerk to amend the Terms of References for Committees as generally described in staff report SRCFS.25.041;
- c) That staff be directed to report back to Council with a revised Appointment Policy that includes the following:
  - i) The ability for Permanent Residents (as defined in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*) to be appointed;
  - ii) That mid-term appointments be made, in general, from applicants who applied at the beginning of the term;
  - iii) Citizen Members only be eligible for appointment to one Committee except in exceptional circumstances as generally described in staff report SRCFS.25.041; and
  - iv) That appointments of Citizen Members to Committees at the start of each new Term of Council be staggered over a two to three month period, prioritizing the Richmond Hill Public Library Board, Committee of Adjustment and the Heritage Richmond Hill Committee.

### Contact Person(s):

- Ryan Ban, Deputy City Clerk, Extension 5547
- Stephen M.A. Huycke, City Clerk, Extension 2529

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### Report Approval:

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

### Key Messages:

- The City's Appointment Policy for Committees, as well as the Terms of Reference for Committees, should be updated to enhance the recruitment and selection process
- A Committee's Terms of Reference should include, where appropriate, key qualifications and criteria for Citizen Members to enhance the composition of the Committees
- Canadian Citizens, as well as Permanent Residents, should be considered for appointment to Committees
- Mid-term vacancies should generally be filled from interested applicants who applied at the start of a new Term of Council without a new recruitment process
- The appointment of Committees at the start of a new Term of Council should be staggered over two to three months, with priority being given to the Richmond Hill Public Library Board, Committee of Adjustment and the Heritage Richmond Hill Committee

### Background:

Since the beginning of the 2022 to 2026 Term of Council, the Office of the Clerk has received approximately 15 resignations from Citizen Members who sit on City Advisory Committees. This elevated turnover, with Citizen Members resigning before the end of their term or failing to consistently attend meetings, is a result of a recurring challenge in the recruitment process where there is a misalignment between applicants and the specific mandates, responsibilities, and time commitments of the Committees and its Citizen Members.

Currently, Council appoints Citizen Members to the following Committees:

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Affordable Housing Strategy Implementation Committee
- Committee of Adjustment
- David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Steering Committee
- Heritage Centre Advisory Committee
- Heritage Richmond Hill
- Property Standards Committee
- Richmond Hill Public Library Board
- Road Watch Committee

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To improve the appointment process for Citizen Members of Committees at the start of a Council term, and to enhance Committee effectiveness and reduce the administrative burden associated with filling mid-term vacancies, it is recommended that adjustments be made to the current recruitment and selection process for Citizen Members to ensure that efforts focus on attracting and retaining individuals who demonstrate a clear understanding of the Committee's purpose and time commitments in addition to bringing relevant experience, expertise and a strong interest in the subject matter of Committees. These adjustments are further outlined in the subsequent sections.

### **Discussion:**

The City's Appointment Policy for Advisory Committees, Task Forces and Steering Committees came into effect June 24, 2008. Since the policy came into effect, no revisions have been made, and the policy is not being consistently followed. Staff determined that a thorough review was necessary to ensure the policy was still meeting the needs of the City and its residents.

Staff undertook an external review of the recruitment and selection process of Committees with Citizen Members for 18 municipalities within Ontario. Of the 18 municipalities that staff reviewed, 17 municipalities have formal Committee appointment policies for Citizen Members, and 13 municipalities utilize Citizen Member qualifications in their Terms of References for Committees. Further, 13 municipalities utilize short-lists from original recruitment applications to address vacancies that arise throughout the Term of Council and 7 of the 18 municipalities utilize Selection/Nominating Panels. Appendix B outlines the results of the external review.

Internally, City staff supporting Committees were consulted and were in support of developing an evaluation framework to assess and attract qualified applicants by identifying relevant qualifications such as lived or professional experience, subject matter interest and availability to participate. Staff were generally in agreement that having specific qualifications and criteria for Citizen Members would help ensure that applicants are well aligned with each Committee's mandate and motivated to contribute meaningfully. Staff also considered measures to better communicate expectations during recruitment, such as outlining time commitments, responsibilities, and the scope of Committee work to improve member retention.

### **Recommendations to Council:**

Staff recommend that changes to the Appointment Policy and Committee Terms of Reference, as further discussed below, be implemented for the start of the 2026 to 2030 Term of Council.

### **Changes to Committees Terms of Reference to Enhance Recruitment Process**

To strengthen the recruitment process for Council Committees, staff recommend updating the Terms of Reference for Committees with Citizen Members with clearly

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defined qualifications and skills that reflect the mandate of each Committee and support the selection of productive members. Staff supporting the Committees will be responsible for developing the qualifications, selection criteria and key considerations for the appointment of Citizen Members. These guidelines will inform Council's selection process. It is recommended that Council delegate authority to the City Clerk to make the necessary changes to the Terms of Reference, in consultation with staff responsible for each Committee, prior to the recruitment period for the 2026 to 2030 Term of Council. This recommendation will not, however, generally apply to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* already includes qualifications for appointees to the AAC.

### **Recommended Changes to the Appointment Policy**

#### **Broaden Community Representation**

Staff recommend that the Appointment Policy be updated to allow Permanent Residents to join Committees. Currently only Canadian Citizens can be appointed. This change provides for broader community representation and inclusivity, promotes equity and reflects the diversity of the community by enabling long-term residents, who contribute meaningfully to civic life, to participate in municipal governance.

#### **Mid-term Vacancy Selection Process**

It is recommended that mid-term vacancies generally be filled from applicants who applied for a particular Committee at the beginning of the term. In this scenario, previous applicants would be contacted to confirm continued interest and eligibility. The list of applicants who are still interested would then be presented to Council for consideration without further recruitment. The only exception to this proposal would be the Richmond Hill Public Library Board. Under subsection 11(1) of the *Public Libraries Act*, 1990, municipalities are required to give public notice of vacancies and invite applications to fill those vacancies.

#### **Serving on Multiple Committees**

Under the current policy, Citizen Members cannot serve on more than one Committee at the same time. It is recommended that the policy be updated to permit a Citizen Member to serve on more than one Committee only if: a) despite recruitment, no other qualified candidate has been identified; or, b) the person provides exceptional knowledge and experience to warrant, as determined by Council, serving on more than one Committee at the same time.

#### **Selection Process - Staggering Appointments at the start of a new Term of Council**

Currently at the beginning of each Term of Council, the Office of the Clerk provides Council with a confidential closed session report for each Committee that includes the applications of every person who has applied to be appointed to the various Committees. These reports are usually presented at each of the first two or three

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regular meetings of Council in closed session, during which all Council members are able to discuss their preferred candidates.

Staff generally recommend that the current selection process be maintained. However, staff believe that there is value in staggering appointments over the first two to three months of the new Term of Council. By staggering the appointments, more time would be provided for Members of Council (especially newly elected Members of Council) to become familiar with issues that each of the Committees are likely to consider before selecting persons to serve on those Committees.

If the current selection process is maintained but staggered, the Office of the Clerk will prioritize bringing forward applications for the Richmond Hill Public Library Board, Committee of Adjustment and the Heritage Richmond Hill Committee to meet statutory deadlines.

### **Alternative Selection Process – Selection Panels**

As an alternative selection process, Council could consider implementing a Selection Panel process to select Citizen Member appointments. In this alternative approach, Council members appointed to serve on the various Committees would form a Selection Panel who will be responsible for reviewing all applications received for a particular Committee. The Selection Panel would then prepare a list of recommended appointments for Council's Consideration. The Selection Panel, comprised of two to three Members of Council who are selected by the Mayor, would be formed at the beginning of each new term of Council.

These Selection Panels would meet with representatives of the Office of the Clerk and staff in other divisions responsible for the various Committees to review all the applications received for a Committee. The panel would then recommend candidates for appointment that would be considered during a closed session portion of a regular Council Meeting. \

While the Selection Panel is an option, staff believe there are challenges associated with this option. Firstly, this method would not work for the Richmond Hill Public Library Board because Council is obligated under the *Public Libraries Act* to make appointments at its first meeting or at the next meeting. There is not sufficient time to form a Selection Panel, hold one or more meetings of the Selection Panel, and make recommendations to Council. This means that there would be two different selection methods for Citizen Members. The statutory time frames for recommendations under the *Ontario Heritage Act* also makes it likely that the Selection Panel method would not work for the Heritage Richmond Hill Committee. Secondly, the Selection Panel method could significantly lengthen the time to make appointments to all other Committees due to the increased demand on time for the Office of the Clerk and other City Staff. Similar challenges have been reported by municipalities who dissolved their Selection Panels.

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While not recommended, if Council wants to proceed with the Selection Panel method of making Committee appointments, Clause c) iv) of the recommendation should be changed to read as follows:

- iv) A revised selection process that includes the establishment of a Selection Panel as generally described in staff report SRCFS.25.041.

### **Financial Implications:**

There are no financial, staffing or other implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

### **Relationship to Strategic Plan 2024-2027:**

The appointment of Citizen Members to the City of Richmond Hill's advisory Committee's directly aligns with Pillar 2, Priority 1 of the Strategic Plan, to engage the community, stakeholders and City staff to support informed participation and to ensure that all voices can contribute toward effective decision-making.

### **Attachments:**

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Appendix A - Appointment Policy - Advisory Committees, Task Forces, Steering Committees
- Appendix B - External Review Results

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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCFS.25.041- Committee Appointment Policy Options - Final.docx
Attachments:	- Appendix A - Appointment Policy - Advisory Committees, Task Forces, Steering Committees - Accessible.pdf - Appendix B - External Review Results - Accessible.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 26, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Sherry Adams - Sep 25, 2025 - 4:28 PM**

**Darlene Joslin - Sep 26, 2025 - 8:33 AM**