



*An ocean of opportunity*

## BRIEFING PAPER

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SUBJECT: Recreation Advisory and Marathon Committees

## BACKGROUND

Our Recreation Advisory Committee (RAC) was established in 2019 with the goal of advising Council on matters related to recreational activities and facilities within our community. Over the years, the RAC has played a crucial role in providing recommendations on programming initiatives, and recreational services.

Since 2018, our Marathon Committee has been helping to organize a range of the activities related to the Nova Scotia Marathon and has advised Council on matters relating to the Marathon. Over the years, the Committee has assisted with various aspects of the event, including sponsor solicitation, volunteer recruitment and community engagement.

This briefing paper aims to assess the effectiveness of the existing committee and explore alternative approaches, such as an advisory group, that may better serve the changing landscape of our community's recreational initiatives.

## ANALYSIS

It is imperative to acknowledge the vital role both of the committees have played over the years in advising the municipality on matters pertaining to recreation and the marathon. However, as our community's needs and dynamics have evolved, it is worth considering whether the current structure of the committees continue to align with our objectives and resources. For example, now that we contract the bulk, the members of the Marathon Committee have moved more to an advisory role. This has been positive as it has allowed members to take on new event activities and volunteer in a capacity they enjoy and take pride in.

Advisory groups serve as dynamic and specialized forums for gathering expert insights and recommendations on specific projects, initiatives or issues. Composed of individuals with unique expertise or interest in a relevant field, these groups offer targeted analysis and guidance. Their flexible nature allows for efficient resource allocation, making them particularly effective for short-term projects

or focused matters. Advisory groups play a crucial role in harnessing specialized knowledge to inform decision-making processes.

- **Specialized Expertise:** Advisory groups are assembled for their specific expertise, interest or experience in a particular area or project. This allows for in-depth analysis and recommendations on specialized matters.
- **Flexibility:** They are highly flexible and can be created for short-term projects or to address specific issues as they arise. This adaptability allows for efficient use of resources and expertise and can provide an opportunity to hear from underserved populations.
- **Task-Specific Focus:** Advisory groups are usually formed to address a particular issue or provide recommendations for a specific project. This ensures that the group's efforts are concentrated on the defined objective.
- **Community Engagement:** They can facilitate meaningful community engagement by involving relevant stakeholders and experts in decision-making processes. This can lead to more inclusive and informed recommendations.
- **Timely Responses:** Due to their focused nature, advisory groups can provide timely responses and recommendations, which is particularly beneficial for time-sensitive projects or issues.

Committees, on the other hand, represent a more enduring and structured approach to governance. They are established with a long-term mandate to oversee specific areas of an operation. They serve as permanent forums for addressing a comprehensive range of issues within their defined scope. With diverse membership representing various stakeholders, committees provide consistent and sustained guidance, leveraging accumulated institutional knowledge to shape policies and initiatives over time.

- **Permanent Structure:** Committees have a long-term mandate and exist for the duration of their defined purpose. This provides stability and continuity in overseeing specific areas of operations.
- **Diverse Membership:** They typically have a diverse membership, representing various stakeholders and interests within the community. This diversity ensures a broader perspective on matters within their defined scope.
- **Comprehensive Oversight:** Committees provide ongoing guidance and oversight on a broad range of issues within their defined scope. They have a more comprehensive role in monitoring and shaping policies and initiatives.
- **Consistency:** Due to their permanent nature, committees offer a consistent forum for addressing issues and making recommendations over an extended period. This can lead to more consistent and enduring policies.
- **Institutional Knowledge:** Over time, committees accumulate institutional knowledge and expertise, which can be invaluable in providing sustained guidance on complex and evolving issues.

## CAUTIONARY NOTES

In determining the most suitable approach for addressing recreational matters within our community, several key considerations come to the forefront. Each option - be it an advisory group or committee -

brings its own set of advantages and considerations. Careful evaluation of these factors will guide you towards a decision that aligns most closely with our community's current needs and future aspirations.

In determining the best option, consideration should be given to:

- whether the matter at hand requires specialized, short-term advice (advisory group) or ongoing, comprehensive oversight (committee).
- the availability of interested parties or specialized expertise within the community and the municipality's capacity to sustain a committee.
- the urgency of the issue and whether a more immediate response is required (advisory group) or if it warrants ongoing attention (committee).
- the level of community engagement desired for the issue. An advisory group may be more conducive to involving specific stakeholders, while a committee may provide a more inclusive platform.

Ultimately, the choice between an advisory group and a committee should align with the specific needs, goals, and resources of the municipality in addressing recreation-related matters.

#### FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Based on an evaluation of both options and our current realities, **we recommend the establishment of advisory groups for both Recreation and the Marathon, instead of the Recreation Advisory Committee and Marathon Committee.**

This approach will allow us to:

- assemble members possessing specific expertise relevant to particular projects or issues, ensuring the most informed recommendations;
- tailor the composition and duration of an Advisory Group to the unique needs of each project, allowing for efficient use of resources; and
- facilitate meaningful community engagement by involving relevant stakeholders and experts in decision-making processes.

The establishment of advisory groups will offer a more dynamic and adaptable approach to addressing specific initiatives and issues. It complements our existing organizational structure, while providing a more targeted and specialized advisory mechanism.

In order to ensure that the chosen approach remains effective and responsive to the needs of our community, an annual evaluation process will be implemented. This process will serve as a crucial mechanism for gathering feedback, assessing performance, and identifying areas for improvement. The insights gained from this annual evaluation process will be instrumental in fine-tuning the operations of

the advisory groups. Additionally, it will provide you with a valuable feedback loop to inform future decision-making. Should any significant issues arise, the evaluation process will serve as an early warning system, allowing for timely interventions and adjustments.