



CITY OF ST. ALBERT ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

TITLE: STANDING COMMITTEE REVIEW

PURPOSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

The purpose of this Administrative Backgrounder is to set out the position of Administration with respect to a Motion that Councillor Hughes served Notice of her intention to make, on March 2, 2020, in accordance with Section 23 of the *Procedure Bylaw*.

PROPOSED MOTION:

That a review of the effectiveness of the Standing Committee process and recommendations for improvements are brought to Council before the end of Q3 2020.

POSITION OF ADMINISTRATION ON PROPOSED MOTION

Administration interprets the Motion to refer to the administrative aspects and implications of the Standing Committee model that was introduced upon enactment of the bylaws (39/2019 and 40/2019) that created the Community Living and Community Growth and Infrastructure Standing Committees. A review of the effectiveness of the Standing Committees from a governance perspective would be a matter for Council to take up -- Administration could facilitate this (for example by setting up a governance workshop under Workshop Policy C-CG-13) but Administration should not encroach upon Council's responsibility to establish and evaluate its methods and structures for governance of the City.

On this understanding of the scope and intent of the Motion, Administration would be able to conduct an administrative review of the Standing Committee process within the time frame specified. That said, Administration has concerns about the due date of end of Q3 because of the significant process changes resulting from the shift to all-virtual meetings occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic. The review would necessarily encompass a significant period of time when the Standing Committee process has been altered in important ways that affect both administrative efficiencies and Council members' interface with the public. Since it is hoped by all of us that this period of time will come to an end, it is questionable whether learnings from this period will be very useful for a time when things are back to normal. It should also be borne in mind that Administration's overall workload has increased a great deal since the onset of the pandemic, and with the response phase now transitioning to a recovery phase it is unlikely that the volume of work will abate anytime soon.

One possibility for dealing with this motion might be to push the administrative review back to the end of 2020 or even later, but then it would be starting to get closer to the mandatory review at the end of Q3 2021 that is provided for in the Standing Committee bylaws.

Administration will do its best to comply with Council's direction in this matter, whether by way of the Motion as presented or as amended.

Report Date: May 4, 2020

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