| To:         | Chair and Members  
            | Emergency and Community Services Committee |
|------------|-------------------|
| From:      | Nicholas Klimchuk (Co-chair),  
            | Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee  
            | (to be signed by the Chair) |
| Date:      | November 5, 2008  |
| Re:        | 2008 Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) Update (HYAC08-001) |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

(a) That Report HYAC08-001, the 2008 Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) Update, be received.

(b) That the Terms of Reference for the 2008 Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee (attached as Appendix "A" to Report HYAC08-001), be approved.

**BACKGROUND:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Hamilton youth Advisory Committee’s activities and achievements in its first year as well as to outline initiatives planned for 2009.

The Role of the Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee

As stated in the Terms of Reference, the mandate of the City of Hamilton’s Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) is to ensure that youth are involved in the decisions made within the City of Hamilton and in the community that affect them, their families and friends. The HYAC will attempt to provide a youth perspective on municipal issues to be considered by the Mayor, Council and City staff. The HYAC will also inform and involve other youth in the city of Hamilton.

The City’s Youth Advisory Committee Members will also work towards:

- Learning about the issues facing youth in the City of Hamilton
- Work with other youth and youth organizations within the community
Organize city-wide youth focused event(s)

Promote volunteering,

Contribute in a meaningful way to the community in which they live

Recruitment and Selection of Committee Members

The Youth Advisory Committee was formed through a recruitment and selection process coordinated by the Clerk’s in September 2007. A public information bulletin was run in the Hamilton Spectator and recruitment flyers/posters were sent out to schools and youth serving community agencies in the city in an attempt to reach a broad cross-section of youth. An information session was also held at the Convention Centre; approximately 10 youth attended.

Respondents

The youth on the HYAC range in age from 14 to 24 years and come from East, Central and West Hamilton, Dundas and Stoney Creek. Most of the youth members are students in secondary school, college or university, but some are also graduates and are employed or working on post graduate studies. Overall, 15 youth completed the volunteer advisory committee application. All 15 youth were appointed to the advisory committee. They are:

Cassie Bian, James Buffett, Shevon Clarke, Jonathon Creary, Chauntell Dietrich, Evan Gravely, Kirsten Holubeshen, Leo Johnson, Nicholas Klimchuk, Ben Konyi, Megan Meredith, Alexandra Mindorff, Anna Nguyen, Chengbo Qian, and Lauren Rebelo.

HYAC members are a diverse cross-section of Hamilton youth between the ages of 14 to 24, and reside across the City. They devote a minimum of 2 hours per month for regular meetings from September through June, as well as additional time to work on committee initiatives.

The HYAC committee meets on the third Tuesday of each month. The first meeting took place in November 2007. In January, the committee selected Nicholas Klimchuk and Leo Johnson as Co-Chairs, and Kirsten Holeubeshen as Vice Chair. Since being elected to their executive positions in January, the Co-Chairs and Vice Chair have developed meeting agendas and lead advisory committee meetings with the guidance and assistance of staff. The Executive members have shown great leadership skills and developed numerous strategies to engage their fellow committee members.

Staff Support to the Youth Advisory Committee

The Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee is supported by a part-time youth advisor, Amber Giosi, as well as two City of Hamilton staff liaisons from the Community Services Department: Mark Weingartner (Senior Policy Analyst, Social Development Team) and Corey Beaudoin (Youth-at-Risk Co-coordinator, Recreation Division). Both provide support to the Youth Advisor and the Youth Advisory Committee members on various aspects of municipal government, opportunities within the City and youth engagement.

1 Numerous committee members have resigned as of September 2008 (during the preparation of this report) in order to attend college or university outside of Hamilton. Recruitment is taking place in September and October for new HYAC members.
Mayor and City Council Support

The HYAC committee has been supported by the Mayor and his staff, as well as Councillors Jackson and Merulla who have agreed to represent council at each meeting and will be sharing the responsibility of attending.

PROGRESS TO DATE

HYAC Meetings

The HYAC has also spent time reviewing the Committee’s Terms of Reference (please refer to Appendix A to Report HYAC08-001), defining key values and drafting a mission statement.

HYAC has drafted the following mission statement:

“The City of Hamilton’s Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) is determined to address the issues facing youth, enhance opportunities and ultimately provides a voice for the youth of Hamilton. HYAC intends to achieve this by fostering relationships between youth and the community at large and by initiating and supporting youth oriented events and programs. HYAC’s key values are leadership, integrity, respect and innovation.”

The committee has also agreed upon the following values:

- Respect – Treat everyone including ourselves with dignity, fairness, consistency and consideration,
- Integrity – To be honest, ethical and committed to the youth of Hamilton,
- Leadership – To positively empower youth in our community,
- Innovation – To initiate change by employing new and creative methods and ideas.

HYAC members have focused a great deal of effort on exploring issues facing youth in our city. Each member has researched and presented a relevant issue to the rest of the group. Over a series of meetings committee members have identified what they see as the most pressing issues facing Hamilton’s youth. These include (but are not limited to) education, substance abuse (under age drinking and drug use), homelessness and poverty, violence, lack of opportunities (and lack of awareness of existing opportunities), and a need for career planning and employment related skills.

The committee has grouped these issues into two broad categories. The first is youth opportunities which includes issues like education, homelessness and poverty, career planning and youth opportunities. The second is youth health which includes issues like substance abuse, violence, homelessness and poverty. The youth feel that homelessness and poverty relate to both a lack of opportunities and have significant impacts on health. HYAC has created subcommittees in an effort to focus on and begin to tackle some of these issues.

Guest Speakers
The HYAC committee has shown a great deal of interest in understanding how the City and its various departments work so that they may better understand how they can assist the City in making better choices for the youth of Hamilton. It was decided that one of the best ways to become familiar with the City operates would be to have a series of guest speakers from various departments come to HYAC meetings for a question and answer period. To date, Mike Zegarac, Senior Policy and Projects Manager from Corporate Services, and Joe-Anne Priel, General Manager of the Community Services Department have attended.

**HYAC PLANS FOR 2009**

On a go forward basis and with Council’s support, HYAC’s plans for the balance of 2008 and 2009 include:

- Preparing a report to Council on youth in poverty
- Supporting the recreation Division’s application to PlayWorks for a “youth friendly community” designation for Hamilton
- Providing feedback to inform the work of City of Hamilton initiatives such as the City’s exploration of Rapid Transit and the Recreation Division’s study of playing fields.
- Planning and hosting a youth leadership event/conference
- Developing a HYAC website/youth web portal
- Participating in focus groups to inform the Hamilton Training Advisory Board on youth and employment
- Networking, partnering with and supporting other youth organizations in the community
- Exploring other opportunities to partner with and inform the work of City Departments
CITY OF HAMILTON’S YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mandate

The mandate of the City of Hamilton’s Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) is to ensure that youth are involved in the decisions made within the City of Hamilton and in the community that affect them, their families and friends. The HYAC will provide a youth perspective and advise Council, through reports to the Emergency & Community Services Committee, on municipal. The HYAC will inform and involve other youth in the city of Hamilton.

Mission Statement

The City of Hamilton’s Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) is determined to address the issues facing youth, enhance opportunities and ultimately provide a voice for the youth of Hamilton. HYAC intends to achieve this by fostering relationships between youth and the community at large and by initiating and supporting youth oriented events and programs. HYAC’s key values are leadership, integrity, respect and innovation.

Key Values

The City of Hamilton’s Youth Advisory Committee believes strongly in the key values of Respect, Integrity, Leadership and Innovation.

Respect – Treat everyone including ourselves with dignity, fairness, consistency and consideration

Integrity – To be honest, ethical and committed to the youth of Hamilton

Leadership – To positively empower youth in our community

Innovation – To initiate change by employing new and creative methods and ideas

Values

We believe . . .

• that youth are integral parts of their communities and, as such, have inherent rights and responsibilities;
• that youth should be encouraged and given the opportunity to take a leading role in issues which affect their lives;
• that youth should be consulted whenever decisions that affect them are being made;
• youth are able to make positive contributions to their communities;
• that an investment in young people is an investment in the future; and,
• youth are diverse and there is strength in diversity.
Goals

- To provide direct input into government decision making processes on issues affecting youth;
- To advocate within the government on behalf of youth;
- To develop and maintain effective communications with youth and youth-serving organizations;
- To promote and recognize the abilities and contributions of youth in their communities;
- To foster initiatives for and by youth; and,
- To ensure diversity in the Council’s membership, the selection process considers a number of factors including, but not limited to, geography, gender, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation and ability.

Composition of Committee

The HYAC will be comprised of 20 members, 14 to 24 years of age. The structure of the HYAC should mirror the structure of Council and other municipal committees with either a chairperson and vice-chairperson or co-chairs elected from the general membership. The term of the chair and vice-chair will be one year.

The HYAC committee will also include at least one and no more than three councillors, appointed at each term of office. Due to their many commitments, most of the City’s Volunteer Advisory Committees include only one councillor.

Meeting minutes and reports will be prepared and distributed with the assistance of City staff.

Code of Conduct

- Everyone has a right to her/his own opinion;
- Respect is expected from all those who attend HYAC meetings;
- Everyone has the right to speak without interruption; and,
- Chairs/speakers/staff are to be respected.

Decision Making Process

Each meeting must obtain quorum before commencing and decisions must be made by majority vote in Open Session. Quorum for the Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee is eleven (11), and a majority would be 50% plus one. Only the members present at the meeting may vote.

Representation and Membership

The membership of the HYAC should, where possible, represent the range of diverse individuals that live in and make up the community of Hamilton. The committee should also try to ensure that members come from different schools, youth organizations, and geographic areas of the city and reflect the city’s diversity.
Term of Membership

Members of the HYAC will be appointed by Council for a term to coincide with the term of Council or until such time as a successor is appointed by Council.

Members who wish/need to resign from the Committee, prior to the end of the term may do so by submitting their resignation in writing to Stephanie Paparella, Legislative Assistant, Office of the City Clerk at stephanie.paparella@hamilton.ca.

Meetings

Meetings will take place monthly, outside of normal business and school hours to facilitate maximum participation and attendance. An agenda will be prepared and distributed by the chairperson or his or her designate. HYAC meetings, as with any other City committee meetings, must be open to the public.
A Brief History

• Council approved formation of HYAC January 2007
• Initial recruitment Sept. 2007
  – Youth 14 to 24 years
• First HYAC meeting November 2007
Mandate of HYAC

• Ensure youth are involved in decisions made within City & community
• Provide a youth perspective to Mayor, Council & staff of City
• Inform & involve other youth
HYAC Mission

The City of Hamilton’s Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) is determined to address the issues facing youth, enhance opportunities and ultimately provide a voice for the youth of Hamilton.
HYAC Mission...continued

HYAC intends to achieve this by fostering relationships between youth and the community at large and by initiating and supporting youth oriented events and programs.
HYAC Values

• Respect
• Integrity
• Leadership
• Innovation
Recruitment

- Public info bulletin in Hamilton Spectator
- Application information on City’s website
- Recruitment flyer distributed to schools, youth organizations, youth serving agencies & networks, etc.
- Public information session held
- Recruitment
  - 15 applicants in 2007
  - 40 applicants in 2008
Support to HYAC

- Staff support provided by the Social Development Team and Recreation Division
- Mayor Eisenberger & staff
- Councillors Jackson & Merulla
Committee Progress to Date

• Orientation & team formation
• Elected co-chairs
• Developed HYAC mission and values
• Reviewed Terms of Reference
  – Recommend increasing membership to 20 youth
Committee Progress to Date

• Developed understanding of municipal gov. role & function
  – Guest speakers: Community Services, Finance & Budgets

• Research & peer presentations on issues facing youth in Hamilton

• Priority areas identified:
  – Education, career planning & employment related skills
  – Substance abuse, violence
  – Poverty & homelessness
  – Lack of opportunities for youth
  – Communication
Plans for 2009

• Focus on priority areas
• Prepare a report to Council on youth in poverty
• Support Recreation Division’s application for a “Youth Friendly Community” designation
• Provide feedback to inform the work of City of Hamilton initiatives (e.g. Rapid Transit)
• Explore opportunities to partner with & inform the work of Council & City Departments
Plans for 2009

• Plan & host a youth leadership event/conference
• Partner with & support other youth organizations in the community
• Develop a HYAC website/ youth web portal
• Continue to learn about & create discussion about youth related issues
• Explore other opportunities
Thank You!