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<th>TO:</th>
<th>Mayor and Members Committee of the Whole</th>
<th>WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE</th>
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<td>COMMITTEE DATE:</td>
<td>May 10, 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</td>
<td>Citizens' Forum - Steering Committee Selection (CM10002a) (City Wide)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUBMITTED BY:</td>
<td>Chris Murray</td>
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| PREPARED BY: | Mike Kirkopoulos, ext.5598  
Connie Wheeler, ext. 5779 |
| SIGNATURE: | Tim L. Dobbie Consulting Limited |

**RECOMMENDATION:**

(a) That the names submitted in Confidential Appendix A to report CM10002(a) for the Citizen's Forum Steering Committee be approved;

(b) That Appendix A be released as a public document once City Council has considered and approved the membership.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Members of Council will recall the previous approval by City of Hamilton Council on the terms of reference to develop a Citizens Forum on the area rating for property taxes. The terms of reference suggest that the purpose of the Citizens Forum is “to hear from the citizens of Hamilton prior to making a decision on how to approach area rating for property taxes. This will be facilitated through a Citizens Forum where citizens will be asked to make an informed consensus recommendation to Council on the options associated with this issue.”

Part of the terms of reference approved by City of Hamilton Council was the appointment of members to the Steering Committee (community stakeholders) who would oversee the selection, operations and reporting of the Citizens Forum during 2010. The work of the Citizens Forum ends with the presentation to City of Hamilton Council with respect to their findings in November of 2010.

The purpose of this report is to recommend membership of the Steering Committee to Hamilton Council. The names of the Steering Committee are contained on confidential...
Appendix A to this report and will not be made public until they are finally approved by City of Hamilton Council.

**FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS** (for Recommendation(s) only)

**Financial:**
The funds to carry out this work in the amount of $95,000 have been approved to be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund #110046.

**Staffing:**
The majority of the work regarding this process will be completed by the selected consultant – Tim L. Dobbie Consulting Ltd. Denise O’Connor, who is an expert in the field of citizen involvement, is assisting the consultant. Staff resources are being provided to assist the process from the City Manager’s office, Finance and IS.

**Legal:**
There are no legal implications to this issue.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND** (Chronology of events)

Area rating for property taxes has been a divisive issue. City Council is interested in input from the citizens of Hamilton prior to making a decision on how to approach area rating. The goal of the Citizens Forum initiative, is to engage citizens in a manner that fosters greater appreciation for each other’s needs.

In order to provide citizens of Hamilton with an opportunity to better understand the issue, as well as the options and associated trade-offs, City Council has approved the terms of reference to carry out this Citizens Forum process in February of 2010.

The process requires that City Council approve the membership of a Steering Committee who, with staff, will oversee the Citizens Forum process.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report is consistent with previous Council approvals regarding “area rating options”.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

In order to carry out the terms of reference for the Citizens Forum as approved by City of Hamilton Council, staff has called for proposals from consultants to carry out this work. The work has been awarded to Tim L. Dobbie Consulting Ltd. in conjunction with Denise O’Connor. The terms of reference require that the consultants work with appropriate city staff from the City Manager’s office to bring forward the recommended membership for the Steering Committee to oversee this process.
The staff and consultant have received suggestions from members of Council regarding membership of the Steering Committee as well as providing their own suggestions.

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**
(include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data, if applicable)

The Citizens Forum is an innovative method of incorporating citizen participation in decisions affecting all residents of Hamilton.

Inviting citizens to deliberate and advise on complex issues such as area rating takes the City in the direction of fulfilling the City's strategic plan – in particular citizen engagement.

The terms of reference for the Citizens Forum requires the appointment of a Steering Committee to oversee the work of the Citizens Forum in conjunction with the city staff and the consultant.

The Steering Committee will be tasked with overseeing the random selection of members of the Citizens Forum that represent fairly, the broad cross section of our community. The panel will comprise of one citizen from each ward for a total of 15 members, 5 alternate members will also be selected.

The members of the forum will be randomly selected by the tax rolls as approved in the terms of reference and the Steering Committee will ensure that the names selected provide a reasonable representation of the Hamilton community, particularly with respect to gender, age, income, education and ethnicity.

Council approval of the membership of the Steering Committee will allow the Steering Committee, in conjunction with staff and the consultant to carry out the remainder of the work plan with respect to the Citizens Forum. In general terms, the work plan for the Citizens Forum is as follows:

- Council approval of the membership of the Steering Committee – May, 2010
- Steering Committee selection of the membership of the Citizens Forum involving random selection – June, 2010
- Development of an Issues Book on the area rating matter as well as holding seven focus groups to assist in the development of the Issues Book – June, 2010
- Work of the Citizens Forum – orientation, receiving expert input on the area rating issue – September and early October, 2010
- Citizens Forum deliberation – late October, 2010
- Presentation of the Citizens Forum recommendation to Council – November, 2010

Undertaking an open, transparent and inclusive process will also create confidence from the broader public that the decision City Council makes on area rating reform is fair and
that the community concerns have been taken into account. An unbiased neutral process is essential for the success of this process.

The general public will also have the opportunity to be involved in one of three ways:
- They can review the same materials as the Forum via website
- They can hear the expert communications/presentations to the Forum
- They will receive a presentation from the Forum on their recommendations

Finally, Council will consider the recommendation of the Citizens Forum as part of their deliberation, but are not bound by the recommendations of the Forum.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:
(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

Staff are implementing the terms of reference approved for the work of the Citizens Forum and therefore have not provided alternatives.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)

Focus Areas:
1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization
2. Financial Sustainability
3. Intergovernmental Relationships
4. Growing Our Economy
5. Social Development
6. Environmental Stewardship,
7. Healthy Community

Financial Sustainability
- Financially Sustainable City by 2020
- Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Appendix A – Confidential list of names recommended for membership in the Steering Committee for the Citizens Forum process.