TO: Mayor and Members Committee of the Whole
WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: August 10, 2010

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:
Proposed Citizen Appointments to the Citizens' Forum on Area Rating (CM10002(a)) (City Wide)

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Murray, City Manager
PREPARED BY: Mike Kirkopoulos, 905-546-2424 ext. 5598

SIGNATURE: ____________________________

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the proposed appointments to the Citizen’s Forum for Area Rating, as outlined in Appendix A to Report CM10002(a), be approved.

(b) That, upon approval of all of the proposed citizen members, to the Citizens’ Forum for Area Rating, Confidential Appendix A to Report CM10002(a), become public information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members of Council will recall the approval by City of Hamilton Council of the Terms of Reference to develop a Citizens’ Forum on the area rating for property taxes. The initial report described the purpose and intent in the following quotation “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”.

Members will also recall approval of the membership for the Steering Committee established to oversee the selection, operation and reporting of the Citizens’ Forum during May 2010.
In keeping with the approved Terms of Reference, the Steering Committee and working through the city staff and the consultants, invitations were sent to 2,100 residents randomly selected from the tax roll from each ward in the City. The consultants have subsequently undertaken a lengthy and rigorous process to select candidates to sit on the Forum. The required 15 members, based on 1 member per ward plus an additional 5 members, selected from groupings of wards have been drawn from all the responses received. Letters were sent to the applicants that are being recommended for appointment (as shown in Confidential Appendix A to Report CM10012), to advise them of same; and, have asked, in that letter, that those applicants please confirm that they are still willing/able to participate, should they be approved by Council. As well, letters have been sent to the remaining applicants for their interest in this exciting process.

A provision of the Terms of Reference approved by City of Hamilton Council was to advise Council of those selected to sit on the Citizens’ Forum and that is the purpose of this report.

The names of the Citizens Forum Members are contained in Confidential Appendix A to Report CM10002(a) (attached).

**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.

**Staffing:**
The majority of the work regarding this process will be completed by the selected consultant – Tim L. Dobbie Consulting Ltd. Dr. 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. Guidance on the process is being provided by the Steering Committee members.

**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 approved the Terms of Reference to carry out this Citizens’ Forum process in February of 2010.

City Council has approved the membership of the Steering Committee who, along with staff and consultants, will oversee the Citizens Forum process. In keeping with Council’s request, the members of the forum are now being presented for your information.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

In order to carry out the Terms of Reference for the Citizens’ Forum, as approved by City of Hamilton Council, staff sent out a Request for Proposals to consultants to carry out this work. The work was awarded to Tim L. Dobbie Consulting Ltd. in conjunction with Dr. Denise O’Connor. In keeping with the Terms of Reference, the membership for the Steering Committee was previously presented and the membership of the Forum is presented as an information item as requested.

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Steering Committee has overseen the random sessions of members of the Citizens’ Forum to ensure that the Forum reflects the demographics of our community. The Forum comprises one citizen from each ward for a total of 15 members, plus 5 at-large members selected from groups of wards...specifically 1 & 2, 3 to 5, 6 to 8, 9 to 11 and 12 to 15.

The members of the forum were randomly selected from the tax rolls as approved in the Terms of Reference and the Steering Committee and consultants ensured that the names selected provided a reasonable representation of the Hamilton community, particularly with respect to gender, age, income, education and ethnicity. The make-up of the Forum is as follows:
In general terms, the continuing work plan for the Citizens’ Forum is now focused on working towards:

- Orientation of Forum members and receiving expert and community input on the area rating issue – September and early October, 2010;
- Citizens Forum deliberation – late October, 2010; and,

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 two ways:

- They can review and comment on the same materials as the Forum via a dedicated website and the Issues Book; and,
- They can attend selection sessions where the expert communications and presentations are made to the Forum.

Finally, Council will consider the recommendations of the Citizens’ Forum, as part of their deliberation on the future of area rating, but are not bound by the recommendations of the Forum.
ALTERTNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:
(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

None.

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

Confidential Appendix A to Report CM10002(a) – List of Proposed Citizens’ Forum Members
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WARD</th>
<th>At Large Members</th>
<th>WARD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Laura Holland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brad Hall</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deirdre Chartrand</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Maria Telecynas</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sheryl Bartol</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Melissa Camus</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Alex Lolua</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Vince Raso</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>M. Allison Loureiro</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Tony Toma</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Luigi Filice</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Molly Gerofsky</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Ed Wood</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>John Howard</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Joanna Mobach</td>
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