



Date 6 October 2011

City Council Committee Report

To: Mayor Canfield & Members of Council

Fr: Karen Brown

Re: Youth Council

Recommendation:

That Council hereby directs administration to develop a terms of reference for the development of a Youth Council; and

That the proposed terms of reference be brought back to the November Committee of the Whole meeting for Council consideration.

Background:

At the September 19, 2011 Council meeting, a group representing the Youth Action on Drugs program initiative run by the Northwestern Health Unit provided a deputation with regards to an initiative of creating a Youth Council. A copy of the project description for the Youth Action on Drugs has been attached to this report for your reference.

As per the minutes, the intent of the Council would be a group of youth from Kenora who would work with elected officials to strengthen the youth standpoint in the community and help illustrate the current everyday issues. The group would be comprised of a minimum of seven members, with at least two representatives from each high school, and will include a President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. Membership will be for ages 14 – 20, and there would be a minimum one year commitment requirement to hold office.

Following the delegation, Kristin Bulmer from the NWHU contacted the City in follow up. Kristin spoke with the CAO, and there was some discussion about how this group saw this initiative working logistically, as well as which issues would be of interest to this Council. Based on the discussions, it was determined that it would make sense for this group to take the opportunity to attend the October Committee of the Whole meetings to better understand the structure of these meetings, and what types of issues are discussed at them. It was agreed that this group would come and make a deputation at the October 2011 Committee of the Whole meeting, and remain for the duration of the open meeting.

This is an important initiative, and one worthy of support by Council. It is important, however, to ensure that the time spent, by the Youth Council, Council members that may attend and City staff is well spent, and that the matters brought before the Youth Council are issues that matter to them. The City has a great opportunity here to develop a platform that will allow positive and meaningful input into City decisions on items that matter to the youth. We also have the opportunity to give the youth a forum where they are engaged in issues relating to the community and can make a difference in the decisions made. It is a positive initiative that responds to some of the recommendations made with regards to creating a positive space to house for the youth, as contained in the Youth Strategy Report for Kenora, dated March 2011. A copy of this report has also been attached for your reference (see page 13 of this report for these recommendations).

It is recommended that, following attendance at the October Committee of the Whole meeting, administration perform some follow up discussions with this group as to their vision of the Youth Council, as well as perform some independent research as to what other Canadian Cities are doing. Terms of reference to create this group would be developed following this review and could be brought back to the November Committee of the Whole meeting for Council consideration.

Budget:

The City would provide meeting space for this group in the Chambers. The City CAO would be willing to attend meetings and provide access to City Hall on a monthly basis.

Any recommendations made from the Youth Council would need to be considered by Council on a case by case basis.

Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements:

The terms of reference would be developed following consultation with the group who had made the deputation that spurred on this initiative following their attendance at the October Committee of the Whole session. Research as to what other Canadian cities are doing will also lend assistance in drafting the terms of reference.

The individuals making the delegation will be advised as to Council's decision on this matter.