



SUBJECT: 2017 Status Update on Community Engagement

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: City Manager's Office

Report Number: CM-8-18

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 101-03-4

Date to Committee: April 3, 2018

Date to Council: April 23, 2018

Recommendation:

Receive and file city manager's office report CM-8-18 providing a 2017 status update on community engagement.

Purpose:

An Engaging City

- Good Governance

To provide committee and City Council with a status update of how the City of Burlington is using the Community Engagement Charter and the Charter Action Plan and to share highlights of the city's community engagement activities in 2017 and the first 2 months of 2018 through the work of both the Charter Action Team (ChAT) and city staff.

Background and Discussion:

Background:

The Community Engagement Charter (Engagement Charter) was approved by City Council in April of 2013. Shortly after, the General Manager of Community Services assigned a task force of residents who have been involved in developing the Engagement Charter, as well as city staff responsible for coordinating engagement activities, in the city to form ChAT (Charter Action Team). The team's role is to ensure

that community engagement is part of everyday practice at the City of Burlington. In April of 2014, City Council received the Charter Action Plan developed by ChAT. The Charter Action Plan is a guide, created with input from staff and residents, which translated the Community Engagement Charter into a series of actions.

As ChAT continues its work in community engagement, staff is, at the same time, engaging in public involvement opportunities as part of everyday practice. This report reflects the work in which ChAT has had a direct involvement or influence. Appendix “A” outlines the public engagement activities led by staff, members of council and the ChAT team.

Council adopted the 2015-2040 Strategic Plan in April 2016. The strategic plan is the 25 year blueprint for city-building; it is a framework for critical decision-making and considers how we manage our resources. During the engagement process, the city heard what is important to the people of Burlington. The four key strategic directions contained in the plan:

- A City that Grows
- A City that Moves
- A Healthy and Greener City and
- An Engaging City

The strategic direction (or “pillar”) “An Engaging City” clearly demonstrates the city’s commitment to including residents in decision-making. In addition to including a strategic direction in the 25-year strategic plan, the City, in 2016 created two new positions: Corporate Public Involvement Lead, dedicated to community engagement, and a Senior Manager of Government Relations and Strategic Communications to further support community engagement and communications.

Discussion:

Prior to the adoption of the Engagement Charter and the Charter Action Plan, staff connected with people in the community to make them aware of projects, files, studies and decisions to be made as well as to gather public opinion. Some community engagement and involvement was legally required, including certain applications under the provincial Planning Act, while other community engagement and involvement was part of departmental business practices. Previously, staff practices were not consistent in community engagement, in terms of approach, methodology, staff training and tracking of opportunities.

Through its efforts, including frequent team meetings and connections with city staff, ChAT has become an integral part of changing how city staff involves the community in important issues, projects and policy.

The city uses the IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) model for public involvement. The city has trained 63 staff and seven community members in the five-day IAP2 program. The city also offers training in facilitation, clear language, survey design and effective presentation skills.

Appendix “A” of this report highlights both the role of ChAT and outlines accomplishments in community engagement and involvement in 2017 and the first two months of 2018.

The 2017 workplan accomplishments for the ChAT team are as follows:

1. Finalize and roll out the staff checklist for community engagement no later than Q2 of 2017.
 - Status: Checklist has been created and testing has started. Testing will continue using the new online engagement platform and at the Engagement Marketplace (scheduled for April 16, 2018). After the testing is completed, roll out to follow.
2. Recruit an additional citizen member for the ChAT core team, with an emphasis on reflecting Burlington’s diversity no later than Q1 of 2017. Following this, expand ChAT by recruiting and creating a larger, community-based group to help build community capacity.
 - Status: Additional member of the core team has been recruited and well engaged with the team. Two new staff members have been recruited (one left the city and the other completed their term) and fully engaged with the team. There is another team that has been recruited to assist with building capacity, but at the time of writing this report, have not been engaged with projects or tasks.
3. Using ChAT’s leadership and in consultation with staff and residents, secure a new online survey platform no later than Q3 of 2017.
 - Status: A new online engagement platform through a Request for Proposals process has been secured. At the time of writing this report, initial training in the tool is taking place with pilot projects to follow. A communication plan has been created to let the community and staff know about the city’s new online engagement platform. Committee will see a demonstration of the tool on April 3, 2018.
4. Meet with the appropriate citizen advisory committees to bring awareness of the community engagement charter and its’ associated rights and responsibilities throughout the year.

- Status: ChAT representative did meet with the Inclusivity Advisory Committee and plan to meet with other citizen advisory committees in 2018.

The 2018 workplan for the ChAT team are as follows:

1. Development of a 3-year plan.
2. Youth Engagement with a goal of reaching out and getting more young people involved in decision-making in Burlington.

It should be noted that other items such as meeting with citizen advisory committees; community development etc will be part of the 3-year plan, as is point 2 above.

Financial Matters:

Included in the 2018 operating budget submission is a request for funding to support community engagement. Funds have been requested to address the following:

- Online survey platform – in order to engage with residents online
- Training – in order to support staff to provide effective community engagement
- Software and technology – in order to pursue options in a timely manner such as ability to use text messaging to communicate with residents
- Outreach – resources required to attend events, festivals, engagement marketplace etc.

Total Financial Impact

Funding to support community engagement has been approved within the base budget in the 2018 Operating budget.

Connections:

The importance of community engagement is clearly demonstrated as a priority to the city of Burlington by:

- Creation and adoption of the Community Engagement Charter;
- Creation and adoption of the Charter Action Plan;
- A strategic direction /pillar of an “Engaging City” in the city’s 25 year strategic plan. Section 4.1.h states that the “city actively encourages and welcomes collaboration with residents and stakeholders in the decision-making process” with an associated strategic initiative of “the city will continue to implement initiatives in the Community Engagement Charter.”

- “Community Engagement” is identified as a priority in the City Manager’s work plan.
 - ChAT making connections with citizen advisory committees in 2018.
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Public Engagement Matters:

This report has been developed in collaboration with the Charter Action Team while Appendix “A” was developed in collaboration with the offices of Council, city staff and the Charter Action Team. This report and appendix will be posted on the city’s website.

Conclusion:

Through both the Charter Action Team and staff at various levels in the City of Burlington, we continue to build capacity in the community and to include resident input into decision-making. Citizen engagement, like the City itself continues to grow and evolve. Together, we will continue to work to make Burlington one of the best cities in which to live, work, and play in.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Dwyer, on behalf of the Charter Action Team
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Appendices:

- A. CM-8-18 - public engagement activities

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, Director of Finance and Director of Legal. Final approval is by the City Manager.