

## **Rural Economic and Community Development Working Group – Procedures Update**

The transition from the Rural Advisory Committee to the Rural Economic and Community Development Working Group brought change to the rules of procedure. The purpose of this change was to reduce the formality of meetings required by an advisory committee and to encourage greater discussion between members and City staff.

Advisory committees have the following requirements:

- Quorum. If a quorum of the committee was not present, the meeting would be cancelled.
- Reports from staff. Staff were required to provide formal reports through internal approval processes. This reduced the timeliness of reports and the ability to add new information.
- Rules of procedure. Presentations from staff were limited to 10 minutes. Committee members were restricted to 5 minutes speaking time per item. There was limited ability for open discussion between members and staff.

Working groups, in contrast, have more freedom:

- There is no requirement for quorum. Meetings should proceed with as many members as possible.
- There are no requirements for formal reports from staff. Staff are encouraged to share background information in advance of the meeting in appropriate formats.
- There is no requirement for formal votes. Meetings are run by consensus.

Below are best practices that working group members can engage in to ensure effective meetings:

- The role of the Chair is to ensure an orderly and efficient meeting. The Chair acts as a guide, reframing discussion if it goes off topic and moving business along.
- Working group members should follow the guidance of the Chair. The Chair, however, should take into consideration the thoughts of working group members with respect to procedure.
- If a consensus cannot be achieved, a 'straw-vote' should be conducted by show of hands.

- Discussion should be focused on items listed on the meeting agenda. If there is an item a member wishes to discuss that is not on the agenda, it should be raised for discussion at a future meeting. Following the agenda ensures that meetings participants, staff, and the public are aware of what will be discussed and that they can prepare for the meeting
- Members of the public are allowed to attend meetings. It is up to the Chair, considering input from working group members, to determine where and when public members are allowed to speak.
- Staff are to take into consideration comments from the working group following the meeting when completing their work. The working group provides their feedback and advice to staff but does not direct staff. If staff require Council direction in a matter, this will come through the form of a staff report directly to Council. If there has been consultation with the working group on a matter going to Council, staff are to include a summary of the feedback received from the working group in the report.