

## Item 9.2.2



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No.**  
**Executive Standing Committee**  
**November 22, 2021**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Executive Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair, Women's Advisory Committee

**DATE:** November 4, 2021

**SUBJECT:** **Women's Advisory Committee – 2020/21 Annual Report**

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**ORIGIN / LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Administrative Order Number 2019-004-GOV, *Respecting the Women's Advisory Committee in the Halifax Regional Municipality*, sections 18 and 19 provide:

18. The Committee shall submit a written report of activities annually to the Executive Committee.
19. The Chair, or designate, may present the annual report to a meeting of the Executive Standing Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Executive Standing Committee accept the 2020/2021 Women's Advisory Committee Annual Report as presented.

## **BACKGROUND**

On November 26, 2019, the Halifax Regional Council approved Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV to establish the Women's Advisory Committee to support the creation of a gender inclusive municipality. The Committee reports to the Executive Standing Committee of Council. The purpose of the Women's Advisory Committee is to advise the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) on the impact of its municipal policies, programs, and services on women.

Members were appointed in April 2020 but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee's first meeting was not held until September 25, 2020. This report covers the Committee's activities between September 25, 2020 and November 4, 2021.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The following individuals served as members of the Women's Advisory Committee:

- Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair
- Christine Qin Yang, Vice Chair
- Haneen Al-Noman
- Lilian Barraclough
- Tanya Boudreau
- Charla Dorrington
- Mallory LeBlanc
- Joanne Bealy
- Holly Mathias\* (resigned on July 8, 2021)
- Councillor Lisa Blackburn
- Councillor Iona Stoddard
- Former Councillor Lorelei Nicoll\* (resigned on November 10, 2020)

\*Members who resigned during the year

## **MEETINGS**

The Women's Advisory Committee met twelve (12) times between September 25, 2020 and November 4, 2021. Meetings of the Women's Advisory Committee took place virtually on Microsoft Teams between September (2020) and April (2021) and on Zoom between May and November (2021) in accordance with direction from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing under section 14 of the *Emergency Management Act*.

Meetings were held on the following dates:

*Table 1 - Date, location and availability of livestream of Women's Advisory Committee meetings in 2020/2021*

| <b>Date</b>        | <b>Location</b> | <b>Livestream</b> |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| September 25, 2020 | Microsoft Teams |                   |
| November 5, 2020   | Microsoft Teams |                   |
| December 3, 2020   | Microsoft Teams |                   |
| January 7, 2021    | Microsoft Teams |                   |
| February 4, 2021   | Microsoft Teams |                   |
| March 4, 2021      | Microsoft Teams |                   |
| April 1, 2021      | Microsoft Teams |                   |
| May 6, 2021        | Zoom            | Available         |
| June 3, 2021       | Zoom            | Available         |
| July 8, 2021       | Zoom            | Available         |

|                   |      |           |
|-------------------|------|-----------|
| September 9, 2021 | Zoom | Available |
| November 4, 2021  | Zoom | Available |

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Summary of Activities**

The Women's Advisory Committee's business for the period covering September 25, 2020 and November 4, 2021 includes the following:

- 2 Committee member presentations
- 5 presentations from members of the public
- 7 staff reports/presentations
- 6 Committee member-initiated motions
- 1 Report to HRM Strategy Planning Committee
- 7 items of correspondence
- 30 Information Items

The activities of the Women's Advisory Committee were guided by the Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV and by the Work Plan that was developed by Committee Members between September 2020 and March 2021 (Attachment 1). The Work Plan was submitted to the HRM Executive Standing Committee and it was approved on March 22, 2021.

### **2021 Work Plan**

Three priorities for action were specified in the 2021 Work Plan:

1. Housing security for women
2. Engagement of women in municipal politics, and in municipal governance and issues
3. Reviewing existing municipal policies using gender-based analysis.

Committee members determined that they needed to be better informed about each of the above issues. Thus, the Committee received presentations from community members, groups and organizations; Committee Members; and HRM staff, to better inform Committee members on issues around these priorities. Following is a list of the presentations within each priority area, and the outcomes that emerged as a result of the presentations.

### ***Priority 1: Housing Security for Women***

#### ***Presentations***

| Date             | Topic   | Community Presenter  | Staff Presenter                | Member Presenter |
|------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|------------------|
| February 4, 2020 | Women's Housing in Halifax, a Community Perspective | Miia Suokonautio (YWCA Halifax), Heather Byrne (Alice House) and Lisa Mullin (The Marguerite Centre) |                                |                  |
| February 4, 2021 | Municipal Affordable Housing Initiatives            |  | Jillian MacLellan, Planner III |                  |

**Outcomes**

**Motion, April 1, 2021** - Inviting Home for Good Project to Present to Councillors

*Motion approved as follows. Following the meeting, it was determined that the approved motion was outside the Committee's mandate.*

MOVED by Holly Mathias, seconded by Haneen Al-Noman

THAT the Women's Advisory Committee recommend that the Executive Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council invite Home for Good Project members to present the findings of their housing research project to provide an understanding of gendered housing issues specific to HRM.

**Priority 2: Engagement of women in municipal politics, and in municipal governance and issues**

**Presentations**

| Date              | Topic  | Community Presenter  | Staff Presenter   | Member Presenter   |
|-------------------|--|--|---|--------------------|
| April 1, 2021     | Overview of ISANS Programs & Our Work with Women                             | Jennifer Watts, CEO of Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)                                     |   |                    |
| April 1, 2021     | Immigrant Migrant Women's Association of Halifax – who we are and what we do | Maria Jose Yax-Fraser and Nenyo Kwasitsu, Immigrant Migrant Women's Association of Halifax                       |   |                    |
| April 1, 2021     | Anti-Asian Racism  |  |   | Christine Qin Yang |
| May 6, 2021       | Local Immigration Project  |  | Robert Montiel, Local Immigration Partnership Coordinator |                    |
| July 8, 2021      | YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs   | Briana Miller, Coordinator of the Gender Based Violence Project (GVBV) at the YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs |   |                    |
| September 9, 2021 | E'pit Jiksitui / Indigenous Women's Perspectives                             |  | Cheryl Gehue, HRM Community Advisor                       |                    |

|                   |  |  |  |                 |
|-------------------|--|--|--|-----------------|
| September 9, 2021 | Canadian Muslim Women: Discrimination, Sexism and Misperceptions |  |  | Haneen Al-Noman |
| November 4, 2021  | The Impact of Climate Change on Women in the HRM                 | Noreen Mabiza, Ecology Action Center               |  |                 |
| November 4, 2021  | Women’s Quality of Life in Halifax Regional Municipality         | Taylor Hill and Sara Colbourne, Engage Nova Scotia |  |                 |

**Outcomes**

**Motion, December 3, 2020** - Christine Qin Yang: Section 14 Membership, Women’s Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

*Motion approved as follows:*

MOVED by Christine Qin Yang, seconded by Charla Dorrington

THAT the Women’s Advisory Committee recommend that the Executive Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council request staff report with respect to amendments to Administrative Order Number 2019-004-GOV Respecting the Women’s Advisory Committee in the Halifax Regional Municipality, to include women from racialized communities as part of the Committee complement.

**Executive Standing Committee (ESC) response**

The ESC reviewed and passed the recommendation motion from the Women’s Advisory Committee on January 25, 2021. On April 26, 2021, the ESC received a staff recommendation report and passed the motion to adopt the amendments to the Administrative Order, the purpose of which is to amend Administrative Order Number 2019-0040-GOV, the Women’s Advisory Committee Administrative Order.

**Motion, June 3, 2021** - Anti-Asian Racism – gender-based data collection

*Motion approved as follows:*

MOVED by Christine Qin Yang, seconded by Holly Mathias

THAT Women’s Advisory Committee recommend Executive Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council request the Chief Administrative Officer, through the UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Programme, to consider the impact of anti-Asian racism on women’s experiences of safety in public spaces, and explore ways to identify and collect race-based data about these experiences.

**Executive Standing Committee (ESC) Response**

The ESC considered and passed the recommendation motion from the Women’s Advisory Committee on July 12, 2021.

**Motion, June 3, 2021** - Information Resources to Support Safety of Women of Asian Descent

*Motion approved as follows:*

MOVED by Christine Qin Yang, seconded by Charla Dorrington

THAT the Women’s Advisory Committee recommend Executive Standing Committee request a staff report on the provision of information resources to support the safety of women of Asian descent in public spaces in the Halifax region.

**Executive Standing Committee (ESC) Response**

The ESC considered and passed the recommendation motion from the Women’s Advisory Committee on July 12, 2021.

**Priority 3: Reviewing existing municipal policies using gender-based analysis.**

**Presentations**

| Date               | Topic  | Community Presenter | Staff Presenter   | Member Presenter |
|--------------------|--|---------------------|---|------------------|
| September 25, 2020 | Women Wellness Within: Applying a Gender Lens to Arrests | Martha Paynter      |   |                  |
| November 5, 2020   | Overview of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) process    |                     | Caroline Hemstock, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor  |                  |
| June 3, 2021       | HRM Regional Plan Review                                 |                     | Kathleen Fralic, Planner III, Shilo Gempton, Planner III, Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Kate Greene, Program Manager, Emilie Pothier, Planner 1 |                  |

**Outcomes**

**Motion, April 1, 2021** - GBA+ training for all members of the Halifax Regional Council

*Motion approved as follows:*

MOVED by Tanya Boudreau, seconded by Councillor Stoddard

THAT the Women’s Advisory Committee recommend the Executive Standing Committee request a staff report regarding the implementation of the Federal Government’s Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) program as part of the Councillor training and orientation for all current and future members of the Halifax Regional Council.

**Executive Standing Committee (ESC) Response**

The ESC considered the recommendation motion from the Women’s Advisory Committee on April 26, 2021 and passed a staff recommendation motion on July 12, 2021.

**Motion, April 1, 2021** - GBA+ training for all staff members of the Halifax Regional Municipality

*Motion approved as follows:*

MOVED by Tanya Boudreau, seconded by Christine Qin Yang

THAT the Women’s Advisory Committee recommend that the Executive Standing Committee request a staff report regarding the implementation of the Federal Government’s Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) free, self-paced training for all current and future staff members of the Halifax Regional Municipality as part of the employee training.

***Executive Standing Committee (ESC) Response***

The ESC considered the recommendation motion from the Women’s Advisory Committee on April 26, 2021 and passed a staff recommendation motion on July 12, 2021.

**Recommendations to Regional Plan Review Team. July 8, 2021**

The Women’s Advisory Committee submitted a list of seven recommendations regarding the consideration of women’s need in the HRM Strategic Plan (Attachment 2).

**UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Programme**

As indicated in the section 8 of the Terms of Reference, the Committee’s duties include advising the municipality on matters relating to its participation in UN Women’s Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Flagship Program Initiative. Women’s Advisory Committee participated in the scoping study for the HRM’s Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Program in 2020/2021.

*Table 5 - Women’s Advisory Committee’s Participation in the HRM’s Safe City & and Safe Public Spaces Program*

| Meeting Date       | Activities  |
|--------------------|---|
| September 25, 2020 | Amy Siciliano, Public Safety Advisor and Brandy Whitford, Community Safety Intern, gave an overview of Halifax’s participation in UN Women’s Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Flagship Program Initiative and HRM’s Public Safety Strategy, and responded to questions from members of Women’s Advisory Committee. |
| December 3, 2020   | Women’s Advisory Committee contributes to Scoping Study led by Brandy Whitford, Community Safety Intern   |
| January 7, 2021    | Women’s Advisory Committee contributes to Scoping Study led by Brandy Whitford, Community Safety Intern   |
| September 9, 2021  | Amy Brierley, HRM’s Safe City & Safe Public Spaces Program Coordinator gave a presentation on the final draft of <i>What We Heard: Scoping Study of the HRM’s Safe City &amp; Safe Public Spaces Program</i> .  |

### **Professional Development**

The Committee members participated in two elective learning/professional development opportunities in 2020/2021:

1. Federal Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) course: the goal is to have all Committee members complete the GBA+ course. All Committee members have either completed or are in the process of completing this course.
2. Women's Transforming Cities workshop – April 26, 2021

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

There are no risk considerations associated with this report.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Please refer to the Discussion section of this report for information regarding availability of livestreamed meetings. The agenda and reports of the Women's Advisory Committee are posted on Halifax.ca, and draft minutes of the meeting will be made available on Halifax.ca within three business days of the meeting.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Executive Standing Committee could choose to accept the 2020/2021 Annual Report as amended.
2. Executive Standing Committee could choose not to accept the 2020/2021 Annual Report. This is not the recommended action.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Women's Advisory Committee 2021 Work Plan

Attachment 2 – Recommendations of the Women's Advisory Committee to the HRM Strategic Plan Review Committee

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair, Women's Advisory Committee with assistance from Haruka Aoyama, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.490.6517

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# Attachment 1

## Women's Advisory Committee 2021 Work Plan

*The three Action Subcategories listed below were identified at the November 2020 meeting as the priorities for action for 2021. Because the Women's Advisory Committee is new, and Committee Members are new to their role as advisors to the HRM, it has been decided that 2021 will be devoted to becoming better informed about the priorities for action that have been identified. Doing so will equip Committee Members to more effectively perform their role as an Advisory Committee of the HRM.*

| <b>Subcategories/Action</b>   | <b>Alignment with Terms of Reference</b> | <b>Person/ Group Responsible</b> | <b>Resources required other service providers, Government, Funds, etc.</b>  | <b>Time Frame</b> | <b>Desired Outcome</b>  | <b>Performance Indicators: How will you measure your accomplishments</b>   |
|---|--|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|---|--|
| Housing security for women (homelessness, shelters and affordability) | Sections 5 (a) & (c)                     | <i>All Committee Members</i>     | <i>Expertise of staff members of HRM and Halifax Community organizations with knowledge about housing issues in the HRM</i> | 2021              | <i>Committee members will become more knowledgeable about housing issues in the HRM so that they may effectively perform their role as an Advisory Committee to the HRM</i> | <i>Committee Members will receive presentations from at least 3 organizations concerned with housing issues (e.g., HRM Office of Public Safety re: UN Safe Cities program; HRM Regional Planning Office; Halifax YWCA, Alice House, The Marguerite Centre) during 2021.</i><br><br><i>Identify actionable items for the Committee within 2 months of hearing presentations</i> |
| Engagement of women in municipal politics, and in                     | Sections 6(a) and (b)                    | <i>All Committee Members</i>     | <i>Expertise of staff members of the HRM Office of Diversity and</i>  | 2021              | <i>Committee members will become more</i>   | <i>Committee members will hear presentations from at least 3</i>   |

| Subcategories/Action  | Alignment with Terms of Reference       | Person/ Group Responsible    | Resources required other service providers, Government, Funds, etc.  | Time Frame  | Desired Outcome   | Performance Indicators: How will you measure your accomplishments  |
|---|---|------------------------------|--|-------------|---|--|
| municipal governance and issues   |   |                              | <i>Inclusion and of HRM Councillors</i>  |             | <i>knowledgeable about issues that impede women's involvement in municipal politics, governance and other issues in the HRM so that they may effectively perform their role as an Advisory Committee to the HRM</i> | <p><i>persons/organizations regarding this issue, during 2021</i></p> <p><i>Committee members will be involved in planning of HRM International Women's Day 2022 celebrations.</i></p> <p><i>Women History Month 2021 (October 1, 2021)</i></p> <p><i>Gender Equity Week (September 2021)</i></p> <p><i>Support Campaign School for women</i></p> <p><i>Identify actionable items for the Committee within 2 months of hearing presentations</i></p> |
| <p>Reviewing existing municipal policies using gender-based analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introduction of intersectional lenses</li> </ul> | <p>Section 6(a)</p> <p>Section 6(d)</p> | <i>All Committee Members</i> | <i>Expertise of staff members of the HRM Office of Diversity and Inclusion and of Halifax Community Organizations with</i> | <i>2021</i> | <i>Committee members will become more knowledgeable about issues facing</i>   | <i>All members of the Committee will receive a Certificate of Completion of the GBA+ course</i>  |

| Subcategories/Action   | Alignment with Terms of Reference  | Person/ Group Responsible | Resources required other service providers, Government, Funds, etc. | Time Frame | Desired Outcome  | Performance Indicators: How will you measure your accomplishments  |
|--|--|---------------------------|---|------------|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunities of immigrant, racialized or marginalized women in Halifax Regional Municipality</li> <li>▪ Diversity of Women's identities such as transgender and non-binary people</li> <li>▪ Placemaking for women and LGBTQ+ members of the community</li> <li>▪ Inclusion of newcomers/international students to community related to language barriers</li> </ul> | <p>Section 5(d)</p> <p>Section 6(c)</p> <p>Sections 5(a), (c) &amp; 6(a)</p> |                           | <p><i>specialized knowledge of these issues</i></p>                 |            | <p><i>immigrant, racialized, marginalized, transgendered people, non-binary people, LGBTQ+ people, Indigenous people and newcomers who face language barriers in the HRM so that they (the Committee members) may effectively perform their role as an Advisory Committee to the HRM</i></p> | <p><i>Recommend Regional Council members and HRM staff to take GBA+ course.</i></p> <p><i>Committee Members will receive presentations from at least 3 organizations concerned with addressing the needs of the groups identified here in the HRM (e.g., ISANS; Office of Diversity and Inclusion) during 2021.</i></p> <p><i>Identify actionable items for the Committee within 2 months of hearing presentations</i></p> |

[Terms of Reference \(Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV Respecting the Women's Advisory Committee in the Halifax Regional Municipality\)](#)

<sup>i</sup> Examples of indicators taken from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities': Diverse Voices: Tools and Practices to Support all Women Toolkit.

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Available at: <https://fcm.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/tool/diverse-voices-tools-and-practices-wilg.pdf>

# Attachment 2



PO Box 1749  
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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Plan Review Team  
CC: Haruka Aoyama, Legislative Assistant  
Caroline Hemstock, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor  
Tracey Jones-Grant, Managing Director of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO  
FROM: Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair, Women's Advisory Committee  
DATE: July 8, 2021  
SUBJECT: **Regional Plan Review – Women's Advisory Committee**

We, the Women's Advisory Committee of Halifax, are writing to provide input for the 2022 Review of the Halifax Regional Municipal (HRM) Planning Strategy.

First, it should be noted that, when the HRM Planning Strategy was first developed in 2006 and last reviewed in 2014, the HRM Women's Advisory Committee (WACH) had not yet been established. In establishing the WACH in 2019 (see Administrative Order Number 2019-004-GOV), the HRM signaled its intentions to ensure that the voice of women would be reflected in its policies and procedures. Thus, going forward it is important that the HRM's Planning Strategy also reflects the voice of women. To that end, in developing its 2022 updated Strategy document, we encourage the HRM to adopt a 'gender lens' and implement GBA+ in the process of strategy development.

We also encourage the HRM to incorporate specific references in the Strategy document to the role that WACH may play in future HRM strategy development and implementation. For example, Item 5.9 states that the Regional Plan Review will "continue to engage the Diversity and Inclusion Office as a resource during planning projects". We encourage you to add a statement about the role of WACH. Item 5.9 could read as follows (suggested changes have been **bolded** for ease of identification): The Regional Plan Review will "continue to engage the **Women's Advisory Committee** and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as resources during planning projects". Similarly, Item 5.13 could be amended as follows: "Include the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the **Women's Advisory Committee**, and the Diversity & Inclusion Office in the review of the forthcoming engagement tool to ensure it uses best practices for inclusion of **women**, and residents with a wide array of disabilities".

Following are other important items for consideration as the Strategy Planning document is reviewed and updated.

1. The HRM is encouraged to consider intersectionality (e.g., women who are also disabled, women who are also members of a visible minority, etc.) in the development of its policies and procedures. For example, accessibility of community centers and public spaces is of particular concern for Muslim women, and the HRM is encouraged to consider their needs in its policies and procedures.
2. The HRM is encouraged to develop and implement policies for safer, more inclusive, and accessible transportation options for diverse groups of people (e.g., those of all abilities, racial identities, and age

groups), and for women. In this regard, the HRM is encouraged to consider recommendations arising from the HRMs' participation in the UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Programme.

3. 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and communities face violence, discrimination, and lack of accessible services in the HRM. The HRM needs to ensure that its policies ensure the safety of these individuals and communities and that accessible services are available to them.
4. Women are disproportionately impacted by the lack of affordable housing. In addition, women often have different needs than men (e.g., they are more likely to be a single parent). The HRM is encouraged to take into consideration the different needs of women as they address the housing affordability issue.
5. The HRM is encouraged to develop affordable housing alternatives within communities where people, especially Black and Indigenous peoples, have formed cultural attachments.
6. The notion of a 'complete community' [i.e., neighbourhoods where urban planning focuses on livability by prioritizing access to essential community services (like a local grocer, health services, library, community centre), affordable and accessible housing, active and public transportation and diverse recreation options, all proximate to where residents live] is very important in ensuring that all people, and especially women, have access to essential services both in both urban and non-urban areas of HRM. This is particularly important during lockdowns that may occur during a pandemic.
7. Adopting a 'gender lens' is particularly important when developing and implementing policies regarding the use of public spaces (e.g., adequate lighting), including public washrooms, and when considering food security and accessibility.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration as the HRM Strategy Plan is updated for 2022.