



P.O. Box 1749  
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**Item No. 13.3.1**  
**Executive Standing Committee**  
**March 11, 2024**

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

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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

**DATE:** January 9, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Women's Advisory Committee – 2023 Annual Report

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**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

Initiated by the Women's Advisory Committee through the Legislative Assistant.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Administrative Order Number 2019-004-GOV, *Respecting the Women's Advisory Committee in the Halifax Regional Municipality*

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.

**BACKGROUND**

On November 26, 2019, Halifax Regional Council approved Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV, *Respecting the Women's Advisory Committee Administrative Order*, to establish the Women's Advisory Committee. The Women's Advisory Committee reports to the Executive Standing Committee. The purpose of the Women's Advisory Committee is to advise the Municipality on the impact of municipal policies, programs, and services on women.

The current membership is available on [Halifax.ca](http://Halifax.ca)

## DISCUSSION

### **2023 Work Plan**

The Committee identified 3 priorities for 2023 and received presentations from community members, groups and organizations, Committee members, and Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) staff to better inform the Committee on issues around these priorities.

The Women's Advisory Committee approved their 2023 Work Plan on January 12, 2023. The 2023 Work Plan was subsequently approved by the Executive Standing Committee on February 27, 2023.

The three priorities for learning and action were specified in the 2023 Work Plan:

#### **Priority 1: Health, safety, wellness & quality of life facing women with an emphasis on women who are marginalized.**

The following topics were identified as being especially important:

- Self-care and work-life balance
- Sex trafficking in HRM
- Mental health issues facing women
- Gender based violence prevention
- Public safety so that women be more involved in outdoor activity
- Women's income (i.e., poverty, basic income, pay equity)

**Priority 2: Women's involvement in non-traditional roles (including employment and involvement in municipal boards and committees) and in the economic growth of the HRM, with a focus on Indigenous women.**

**Priority 3: Housing security for women (*homelessness, shelters and affordability*).**

### Summary of Activities

The Women's Advisory Committee's business for the period covering January 12, 2023 to December 14, 2023 included the following:

- 5 presentations from members of the public
- 1 joint presentation from staff and members of the public
- 4 Committee led discussions
- 2 Committee member updates
- 1 panel discussion
- 7 staff presentations
- 6 staff updates
- 4 information reports
- 3 motions passed

The Committee also has a standing agenda item to receive staff updates on Halifax Regional Council's activities at each meeting.

The activities of the Women's Advisory Committee were guided by the Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV, *Respecting the Women's Advisory Committee Administrative Order*, and by the Women's Advisory Committee 2023 Work Plan.

Further information on the Summary of Activities is outlined in the Attachment 1.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

No financial implications identified.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

No risk considerations identified.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Women's Advisory Committee is comprised of six citizen members and two Councillors. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications identified.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Summary of Activities

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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: Dr. Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair, Women's Advisory Committee  
Elizabeth Macdonald, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.497.7548

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## ATTACHMENT 1

### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The Committee determined they needed to be better informed about priority issues identified below. Thus, the Committee received presentations and updates from community members, groups and organizations, Committee Members, and HRM staff to better inform the Committee on issues around these priorities.

Following is a list of the presentations and updates within each priority area and the recommendations to the Executive Standing Committee that emerged as a result. Committee led discussions and information reports before that were before the Committee are also listed.

### PRIORITY 1

**Health, safety, wellness & quality of life facing women with an emphasis on women who are marginalized.**

The following topics were identified as being especially important:

- Self-care and work-life balance
- Sex trafficking in HRM
- Mental health issues facing women
- Gender based violence prevention
- Public safety so that women be more involved in outdoor activity
- Women's income (i.e., poverty, basic income pay equity)

#### Presentations:

Date	Topic	Community Presenter	HRM Staff Presenter	Committee Member
January 12	<b>HRM's Park Lighting Strategy</b> <i>(Committee provided feedback and advised on the proposed strategy)</i>		<b>Stephen Cushing, Landscape Architect</b>	
May 4	<b>HRM's Renewed Public Safety Strategy</b>		<b>Amy Siciliano, Public Safety Advisor</b>	
July 6	<b>Human Trafficking in NS: A survivor's perspective</b>	<b>Wyndolyn Brown, Founder, Empowerment for Hope</b>		
July 6	<b>Human Trafficking Advocacy</b>	<b>Jennifer Holleman, Speaker and Author</b>		
September 7	<b>Women's Safety Assessment Tool</b>		<b>Amy Brierley, Program Coordinator, Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces</b>	
September 7	<b>Recreation Funding Access Program</b>		<b>Cassady Yochoff, Inclusion and Accessibility Specialist</b>	

Updates:

Date	Topic	Community Presenter	HRM Staff	Committee Members
February 2	Update on African Heritage Month		Tracey Jones-Grant, Manager, Diversity and Inclusion	
April 6	Staff Update on Sexual Assault Awareness Month		Baylee Brown, Advisor, Gender Equity	
April 6	Staff update on the renewed Halifax Public Safety Strategy		Amy Brierley, Program Coordinator, Safe City and Safe Public Spaces	
September 7	Update on the Retirement of the Police Chief  <i>(Possibility of the Committee providing stakeholder input)</i>			Councillor Becky Kent
November 2	Update on the Safe City & Safe Public Spaces Program		Amy Brierley, Social Policy Strategist, Community Safety	

PRIORITY 2

Women's involvement in nontraditional roles (including employment and involvement in municipal boards and committees) and in the economic growth of the HRM, with a focus on Indigenous women.

Presentations:

Date	Topic	Community Presenter	HRM Staff Presenter	Member Presenter
March 2	Engage NS and Research NS		Conor O'Dea, Senior Policy Advisor, Government Relations and External Affairs	
April 6	HRM Human Resources Practices		Britt Wilson, Executive Director, Human Resources	
October 5	Women's Involvement in Municipal Politics: A Panel Discussion	Councillors Blackburn, Cuttell, Deagle Gammon, Morse, Purdy		Councillors Kent and Lovelace

		MLA Nicoll		
November 2	Great Women Portrait Project	Jo Napier, Artist and Founder of the Great Women Portrait Project		

**Updates:**

Date	Topic	Community Presenter	HRM Staff	Committee Members
September 7	Update on Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives in HRM		Tracey Jones-Grant, Manager, Diversity and Inclusion	
November 2	Update on the Indigenous Women and Two Spirit Leadership Summit and Campaign School		Baylee Brown, Advisory, Gender Equity	
November 2	Review of Women Councillors' October Discussion Panel			Councillor Pam Lovelace

**Outcomes:**

November 2, 2023

Motion approved that the Women's Advisory Committee recommend the Executive Standing Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to provide a staff report exploring the creation of a rebate program for municipal campaign contributions for Mayor and Councillor candidates during regular or special elections held in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The report should include an overview of the legislative and budgetary framework required to enable the proposed program.

**PRIORITY 3**

**Housing security for women** (*homelessness, shelters and affordability*).

**Presentations:**

Date	Topic	Community Presenter	HRM Staff Presenter	Member Presenter
February 2	AKOMA's Affordable Housing Plan for Women	Veronica Marsman, Property Manager, AKOMA Holdings Inc.  Cheyenne Jones, Assistant Property Manager, AKOMA Holdings Inc.		

<b>February 2</b>	<b>Halifax Affordable Housing Initiatives</b>		<b>Jillian MacLellan, Principle Planner</b>  <b>Jamy-Ellen Klenavic, Planner</b>	
<b>March 2</b>	<b>Affordable Housing in HRM</b>	<b>Ren Thomas, Associate Professor, Dalhousie University</b>		
<b>April 6</b>	<b>HRM's Approach to Addressing Homelessness</b>	<b>Gayle Collicutt, Director, Elizabeth Fry Society</b>	<b>Max Chavin, Director, Housing and Homelessness</b>	

**Outcomes:**

July 6, 2023

Motion approved that the Women's Advisory Committee request the Chair write a letter to Mayor Savage and Regional Council expressing the Committee's support for affordable housing initiatives and Regional Council's unanimous defeat of the motion for Item 15.1.6 Case 2023-00455 at the May 9, 2023 meeting of Regional Council.

**COMMITTEE LED DISCUSSIONS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>May 4</b>	<b>Discussion of Work Plan</b>
<b>September 7</b>	<b>Discussion on Human Trafficking Presentations</b>
<b>November 2</b>	<b>Discussion of Agenda Procedures</b>
<b>December 4</b>	<b>Discussion of Work Plan 2024</b>

## INFORMATIONS REPORTS

Date	Title
April 6	Halifax Public Safety Strategy 2023-24 to 2025-26
November 2	Women's Advisory Committee Proposed 2024 Meeting Schedule
November 2	Memorandum from the Legislative Assistant dated October 25, 2024 Re: Requests to Present to the Women's Advisory Committee
December 4	Memorandum from the Legislative Assistant dated November 28, 2024 Re: Requests to Present to the Women's Advisory Committee