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Item No. 13.2.1
Executive Standing Committee
April 28, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Executive Standing Committee

FROM: Jacquie Gahagan, Chair, Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee

DATE: April 3, 2025

SUBJECT: **Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee – 2024 Annual Report**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Initiated by the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee through the Legislative Assistant.

BACKGROUND

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

The current membership is available on [Halifax.ca](https://www.halifax.ca)

DISCUSSION

2024 Revised Work Plan

The Committee identified 3 priorities for 2024 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 and Gender Equity Advisory Committee approved their 2024 Work Plan on February 1, 2024 and approved a Revised 2024 Work Plan on July 4, 2024.

The 2024 Work Plan and Revised 2024 Work Plan was subsequently approved by the Executive Standing Committee on March 11, 2024 and August 26, 2024.

The three priorities for learning and action were specified in the Revised 2024 Work Plan:

Priority 1: Health, safety, wellness & quality of life facing women, with particular emphasis on marginalized women.

The following topics were identified as sub-priorities:

- (a) Addressing gender-based violence
- (b) Addressing mental health for women in HRM
- (c) Addressing public safety risks for women in HRM, including road safety

Priority 2: Women's involvement in HRM governance, particularly indigenous and racialized 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 11, 2024 to December 4, 2024 included the following:

- 1 presentation from members of the public
- 1 joint presentation from staff and members of the public
- 6 Committee led discussions
- 1 Committee member update
- 7 staff presentations
- 5 staff updates
- 7 motions passed

The Committee also has a standing agenda item to receive staff updates on Halifax Regional Council's activities at each meeting and a standing information report titled *Memorandum from the Legislative Assistant re: Requests to Present to the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee*.

The activities of the Women's Advisory Committee were guided by the Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV, *Respecting the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee in the Halifax Regional Municipality*, and by the approved Revised Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee 2024 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 consideration identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee is comprised of 9 citizen members and 2 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.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order Number 2019-004-GOV, *Respecting the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee in the Halifax Regional Municipality*:

Reporting

18. The Committee shall submit a written report of activities annually to the Executive Committee.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Summary of Activities

Report Prepared by: Elizabeth Macdonald, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.497.7548

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 and quality of life facing women, with particular emphasis on marginalized women.

The following topics were identified as being especially important and the following sub-priorities were identified:

- (a) Addressing gender-based violence
- (b) Addressing mental health for women in HRM
- (c) Addressing public safety risk for women in HRM, including road safety

Presentations:

Date	Topic	Community Presenter	HRM Staff Presenter	Committee Member
July 4	Overview of the Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Program		Amy Brierley, Social Policy Strategist, Community Safety	
August 28	HRM's Approach to Harm Reduction		Max Chauvin, Director, Housing & Homelessness and Alyssa Buchanen, Housing Coordinator, Housing & Homelessness	

Updates:

Date	Topic	Community Presenter	HRM Staff	Committee Members
February 11, April 4 & June 20	Muslim Women Safety Report Update		Amy Brierley, Social Policy Strategist	
May 27	Anti-Black Racism Grants Program Update		Tracey Jones-Grant, Managing Director, Office of Diversity &	

			Inclusion	
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PRIORITY 2

Women's involvement in HRM governance, particularly Indigenous and racialized women.

Presentations:

Date	Topic	Community Presenter	HRM Staff Presenter	Member Presenter
January 11	Gender Based Analysis Plus practices at Halifax Regional Municipality		Caroline Hemstock, Immigrant Services Advisor, Diversity & Inclusion and Tracey Jones Grant, Manager, Diversity & Inclusion	
March 7	Review of the Indigenous Women and Two Spirit Campaign School and Leadership Summit	Karen Bernard	Tracey Jones-Grant, Managing director, Office of Diversity & Inclusion, Baylee Brown, Coordinator 2SLGBTQ+/Gender Equity, Community Engagement & Research and Jerid Watton, Coordinator, Outreach & Research Indigenous	
March 7	Administrative Order 2023-001-GOV, Respecting Public Appointments to Committees of Council and External Boards		Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk and Annie Sherry, Public Appointments Coordinator	
October 17	Overview of Policymaking at HRM		Cathy Collett, Senior Policy Advisor	

Updates:

Date	Topic	Community Presenter	HRM Staff	Committee Members
April 4	Jane McKay-Nesbitt: Jane McKay-Nesbitt: Update on the 2023 Annual Report			Jane McKay-Nesbitt

	Presentation to the Executive Standing Committee			
August 28	Update on Staff Report re: Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV, Respecting the Women's Advisory Committee in the Halifax Regional Municipality		Carla John, Advisor Diversity & Inclusion, Office of Diversity & Inclusion and Baylee Brown, Coordinator 2SLGBTQ+ /Gender Equity, Community Engagement and Research, Office of Diversity & Inclusion	
August 28	Update on HRM Training Policies		Baylee Brown, Coordinator 2SLGBTQ+ /Gender Equity, Community Engagement and Research, Office of Diversity & Inclusion	
September 19	Update re: Proposed Amendments to Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV, Respecting the Women's Advisory Committee - Change to Terms of Reference		Carla John, Advisor Diversity & Inclusion, Office of Diversity & Inclusion	

Outcomes:

January 11, 2024

Motion approved that the Chair of the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee write a letter on the Committee's behalf to Mayor Savage and Halifax Regional Council regarding the importance of Gender Based Analysis Plus in the 2024/25 Budget Process.

September 19, 2024

Motion approved that the Chair of the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee write a letter on the Committee's behalf to encourage the newly elected Mayor and Regional Council to participate in Gender-Based Analysis (GBA+) training.

December 5, 2024

Motion approved that the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee recommend that Executive Standing Committee request a staff report with respect to requesting that the Mayor write a letter to the Province of Nova Scotia's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to request the definition of "spouse" in the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act be amended to adopt gender neutral language.

Motion approved that the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee request the Chair write a letter to Halifax Regional Council and the Chief Administrative Officer requesting policies be forwarded to the Committee for review from a Sex and Gender Based Analysis Plus lens.

PRIORITY 3

Housing and food security for women in HRM.

Presentations:

Date	Topic	Community Presenter	HRM Staff Presenter	Member Presenter
April 4	Overview of Planning & Development at HRM		Telina Debly, Planner II and Dave Paterson, Principal Planner	
September 19	Overview of Affordable Housing in HRM	Ren Thomas		
December 5	Affordable Housing from a GBA+ Lens - Affordable Housing Programs Administered by HRM		Dave Paterson, Principal Planner, Hannah Peters, Planner I and Alexandria Wilson, Planner II	

COMMITTEE LED DISCUSSIONS

Date	Topic
January 11 & February 1	2024 Work Plan
February 1	Jane McKay-Nesbitt: HRM's Public Appointment Policy
March 7, April 4 & May 27	Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV, Respecting the Women's Advisory Committee in the Halifax Regional Municipality
March 7	Discussion of Meeting Dates and Times
March 7	Application of GBA+ to Planning and Development Policy
June 20 & July 4	Discuss Revisions to the Women's Advisory Committee Approved 2024 Work Plan

Outcomes:

February 1, 2024

Motion approved that the Women's Advisory Committee approve the 2024 Work Plan as circulated and recommend that the Executive Standing Committee review and approve the Women's Advisory Committee 2024 Work Plan and by May 1, 2024, the Committee will review and make amendments to the 2024 Work Plan.

May 27, 2024

Motion approved that the Women's Advisory Committee recommends that the Executive Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report respecting amendments to Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV, Respecting the Women's Advisory Committee in the Halifax Regional Municipality to include gender equity considerations and the Committee name be changed to "Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee".

July 4, 2024

Motion approved that the Women's Advisory Committee approve the 2024 Work Plan as revised and recommend that the Executive Standing Committee review and approve the Women's Advisory Committee Revised 2024 Work Plan.

INFORMATIONS REPORTS

Date	Title
Standing Item	Memorandum from the Legislative Assistant re: Requests to Present to the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee