

MOTION

5. Establishing a Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee

Vancouver City Council, at its meeting on October 30, 2012, referred this matter to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transportation and Environment meeting on October 31, 2012, in order to hear from speakers.

MOVED by Councillor Andrea Reimer

WHEREAS

1. The Family Court/Youth Justice Committee (FCYJC) is a citizen's advisory committee created by provincial statute;
2. The 2012 FCYJC undertook a review of their mandate and determined that:
  - the mandated work of the FCYJC is largely undertaken by service providers, government agencies and non-profit organizations in Vancouver;
  - many cities in the province are reviewing their Family Court committees; and
  - in consultation with youth serving organizations there is an identified need for a family, children and youth advisory committee on a broader range of issues in the City of Vancouver;
3. In September 2012, Council was advised that the 2012 FCYJC would be completing their full report by the end of October 2012 with recommendations for moving forward.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive the report of the FCYJC as attached in Appendix A;

AND FURTHER THAT Staff be directed to report back to Council, after consultation with family, children and youth serving organizations that the City works with including the Vancouver School Board and Vancouver Park Board, on the recommendations in the 2012 FCYJC report to establish a Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee.

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VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-11

September 26, 2012

Councillor Andrea Reimer  
Council Liaison, Family Court/Youth Justice Committee

Dear Councillor Reimer:

**RE: Family Court/Youth Justice Committee**

The Family Court/Youth Justice Committee (FC/YJC) is a City Council appointed and provincially mandated citizen advisory committee. The Committee's duties are to:

- (a) Examine and consider resources available in the community for families, children and youth, and professionals working with this population and young offenders.
- (b) Provide leadership on youth justice, family, and social issues.
- (c) Make recommendations to the Court, to the Attorney General, to the City Council or to others, as required.
- (d) Assist the Court when requested in individual cases referred to the Committee.
- (e) Act as a Family Court when required (this is the provincially mandated portion of the committee).

In practice, the FC/YJC does not fulfill the last two duties (d and e) due to the availability of sufficient legal resources in Vancouver, whereas FC/YJ Committees in smaller/rural municipalities may be required to fulfill these duties. As a result, the Committee focuses on providing leadership, advocacy and recommendations surrounding youth and family issues (duties a, b and c).

The term for the FCYJC is provincially stipulated to run for one year, as opposed to the three-year terms of other Council-appointed citizen advisory committees. There have been major issues regarding the functionality of the committee due to this short term, which makes it difficult to create continuity, focus and cohesion within the FC/YJC.

Over the past two years, the FC/YJC began addressing the issues related to the structure of the Committee. Two main points were conceded. First, it is difficult to affect change in legal/court settings due to the civic jurisdiction of the committee and the provincial/federal jurisdiction of law/police. Second, there is an inherent difficulty in maintaining momentum within the Committee with a term of one-year and, potentially, only ten meetings. Of these

ten meetings only four meetings per year are clerked by City staff, which then - and only then - allows for motions to be passed.

It should be noted that the FC/YJC has acted, due to being provincially mandated, as the de-facto citizen advisory committee for children, youth and family because the creation of a separate committee for children, youth and families would have been duplicative and, potentially, wasteful. But because of the aforementioned structural challenges of the FC/YJC, children, youth and families are left without fully functioning representation through the citizens advisory committee system. This, in the opinion of the current FC/YJC, is unacceptable.

In light of these deep challenges, the current FC/YJC proposes that the Committee be dissolved of its current form and re-invented under the scheme laid out below.

1. **Name of the New Committee:** 'Children, Youth and Families Committee' (CYFC).
2. **Membership:** The membership parameters below are intended to create a diversity of representation for the proposed committee:
  - Maximum of 24 members;
  - 3 year-term per member, at the start of every new Council term;
  - Membership is divided into the three following 'age brackets' in order to create proportionality:
    - Children, ages 14 and under
    - Youth, ages 15-24
    - Parents & Service Providers, ages 24+;
  - Ages will be 'grandfathered' according to the date at which an individual joins the committee;
  - Each of the three 'age brackets' above is reserved 8 seats each on the CYFC;
  - Within each 'age bracket', half of those seats (4) will be open to the General Public. The other four seats per 'age bracket' are to be designated to representatives of organizations that work on issues related to Children, Youth and Families;
  - Working groups/sub-committees will be established to represent each 'age bracket';
  - Further working groups or subcommittees can be made under the auspices of the CYFC;
  - Children and Youth working groups could ask for a reduced one-year commitment;
  - Committee working groups may ask for assistance from the general public. These individuals would become members of the working group, but non-voting members of the Committee, as per other advisory committees; and

- If an individual is unable to fulfill their term, replacement can occur as per other advisory committees.
3. **Goals:** The Children, Youth and Families Committee will have an advising function and create representation for children, youth and families on the issues it chooses to pursue and on issues brought to it by City Council.
  4. **Deliverables:**
    - The Child, Youth and Families Committee will have four regular meetings per year.
    - Working sessions can meet more often/as needed.
    - The main committee will report on its work to City Council.
  5. **Scope/Jurisdiction:** The Provincially-mandate duties to assist the Court when requested in individual cases referred to the Committee and act as a Family Court when required will be subsumed through the role of the main committee and not through a separate sub-committee or working group.

The CYFC will:

- Examine and consider resources available in the City of Vancouver for families, children and youth, and professionals working with these populations.
- Provide leadership on child, youth, family, and social issues within Vancouver.
- Advocate to the City Council, Province, Federal Government, Court, Attorney General, or to others, as required.
- Work on issues that the City of Vancouver brings to the committee for its opinion, recommendations and comments.

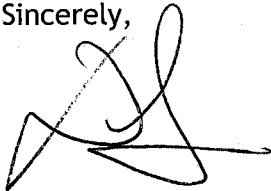
The CYFC will not:

- Advocate on family court or youth justice issues pertaining to provincial or national jurisdictions
  - Provide direct programming or services
  - Apply for grants that compete with non-profit organizations
6. **Resources and Budget:** Any funds in the FC/YJC bank account will be transferred to the new CYFC.

## 7. Governance

- Four City-clerked meetings per year as per other advisory committees.
- Motions to be passed by a simple majority as per the City of Vancouver Procedure By-Law.
- Decision-Making Technique and Relationships of Authority within the group are to resemble the structures of other City council appointed citizen advisory committees.
- The new committee's meetings will be open to public.
- It is recognized that having children on a committee and in working groups will create some challenges. Logistics, suitable format, and supports around having children on the committee will need to be worked out.

Sincerely,



Drew Stewart, Chair  
Family Court/Youth Justice Committee



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Family Court/Youth Justice Committee

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