

1. PEOPLE'S HEARINGS/AUDIENCES POPULAIRES

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS, AS AMENDED

1. **That the People's Hearings be presented to the Council meeting of 25 March 1998. That the presentation be at 1:30 pm during the Council meeting, as Council earlier agreed to do in October 1997.**

DOCUMENTATION

1. A/Co-ordinator, Community Services Committee report dated 10 February 1998 is immediately attached.
2. Extract of Draft Minute, Community Services Committee, 19 February 1998

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf. **03-07-98-0127**
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 10 February 1998

TO/DEST. Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. A/Committee Co-ordinator

SUBJECT/OBJET **PEOPLE'S HEARINGS/AUDIENCES POPULAIRES**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Services Committee receive this presentation for information.

BACKGROUND

Councillor D. Holmes and Chair A. Munter have requested that the Community Services Committee hear a Presentation from Ms. Joanne Steven, to provide an update on the People's Hearings/Audiences populaires at the CSC meeting of 19 February 1998.

This report is respectfully submitted.

Approved by
J. Bionda

PRESENTATION

1. PEOPLE'S HEARING/AUDIENCES POPULAIRES

- A/Co-ordinator, Community Services Committee report dated 18 February 1998

Committee received a bilingual presentation by Ms. Joanne Steven and Ms. Louise Delisle representing the Organizing Committee of the People's Hearings/Audiences populaires. Ms. J. Steven began by stating that in October 1997, over 100 people participated in five hearings organized in Ottawa-Carleton. The hearings provided an opportunity for people living in poverty to talk about their difficulties, particularly since the provincial government's cuts to Social Assistance.

The Organizing Committee is currently finalizing a report containing individual experiences, supporting material, and a set of recommendations which will address a variety of issues related to poverty.

The Organizing Committee has unsuccessfully attempted to arrange a date to make a final presentation to Council. Regional Chair B. Chiarelli informed the Organizing Committee that he would not support a presentation to a regular Council meeting as it would set a precedent to other public interest groups doing so. Although, in order to remain accountable to the motion passed by the previous Council (October 1997), he would support a presentation occurring immediately prior to a Council meeting, to which all Councillors and Rogers Cable TV would be invited to attend.

The Organizing Committee believes it is critical that their recommendations be presented prior to the budgeting process, and therefore have decided to accept this offer. They are currently negotiating the date of 25 March 1998 with the Regional Chair's office.

The project requests the support of the Community Services Committee (CSC) further by endorsing the request to present on 25 March; attending the presentation; and ensuring that recommendations be entered into an official process whereby they can be addressed and acted upon by Council.

Questions

Councillor Holmes stated that when the Organizing Committee presented to the CSC in October 1997, they requested a process be established to enable them to

go to Council so that all Councillors would have the opportunity to hear what the residents of Ottawa-Carleton had to say about living in poverty. She asked whether or not the CSC recommendation to Council, and subsequently approved by Council, was still acceptable to the Organizing Committee.

In response, Ms. Steven explained that the Organizing Committee was cognizant of time constraints and would like to present recommendations before Council before budget decisions are made. They do not want to delay the process with further negotiations in this area. While their preference is to present at a regular Council meeting, the Organizing Committee is willing to accept the compromise. Ms. Steven confirmed for Councillor Holmes that the Organizing Committee has spent the last six weeks unsuccessfully trying to negotiate a time at a Council meeting.

Councillor Holmes suggested it may be appropriate to try to get the new Council to agree to a presentation, whereas it was the former Council that had agreed to the previous motion. She emphasized that this committee knew it was a precedent setting motion and it went before Council because it was such an unusual request.

Councillor Loney questioned whether the Organizing Committee had considered presenting its recommendations to this committee, in addition to Council. Ms. J Steven iterated their belief that they would be speaking to the “converted” if they presented their recommendations to this committee. She stated her understanding that the rationale for addressing Council was to reach Councillors who, perhaps, needed the information from the Hearings.

In response to a further question by Councillor Loney, Ms. Steven and Ms. Delisle reiterated their first choice was to present *within* a Council meeting and their second choice was to present on 25 March 1998 *prior to* a Council meeting

Ms. Steven confirmed for Councillor Holmes that at the Hearings, participants were told that they would have the opportunity to report their stories at a Council meeting, as this was the Organizing Committee’s initial understanding.

A motion was put forward by Councillor D. Holmes.

Committee Discussion

Councillor Beamish observed that the original motion (October 1997) did not specify that there would be a Presentation by this group in a formal Council

Extract of Draft Minute
Community Services Committee
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meeting. He opined that the request was extraordinary, and suggested a presentation prior to Council, and making every effort to ensure full attendance by Council members, might be a more effective means of getting the message across, versus competing with other business arising within Council.

Councillor Loney reiterated that the CSC's intent when it passed the motion last October was clear - to have a presentation before Council, and that Council did pass the motion. He stated his support for Councillor Holmes' motion, and put forward an amendment to remind Council of its previous motion last Fall.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen also verbalized her support for the motion citing her rationale as honouring the commitment of the previous Council, and the understanding that the group was not assured of reaching all members of Council outside of a Council meeting. She stated that her position on this matter was not to be interpreted as precedent-setting. Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen emphasized that time constraints on Councillors do not enable them to listen to groups several times, as she predicts may happen. She suggested that other members of Council be invited to attend CSC meetings to hear presentations, or that interest groups meet with Councillors individually, on specific issues.

Chair Munter read relevant portions of the Extract of Minute of CSC meeting 16 October 1997. He opined that the intent was clear - a commitment was made by Council to hear this group in Council and on that basis, the group went into the community and told people that they would be heard. He emphasized that the whole point was to reach those members of Council that don't, and won't, attend CSC meetings and won't attend a briefing.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen observed that the wording of the original motion stated "...communicate to.." and did not specify the form of communication. Chair Munter stated that the intent of the motion was reflected in the committee discussion leading up to the vote on the motion.

Moved by D. Holmes

That the People's Hearings be presented to the Council meeting of 25 March 1998. That the presentation be at 1:30 p.m. during the Council meeting, as Council earlier agreed to do in October 1997.

CARRIED, as amended

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Moved by D. Holmes

That Council be requested to waive the notice required under the Procedure By-law and consider this item at its meeting of 25 Feb 98.

CARRIED, as amended