



Terms of Reference

Urban Design Committee

1.0 PURPOSE AND MANDATE

1.1 The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Urban Design Committee (Committee) is strictly an advisory committee that provides urban design advice and recommendations to Town Staff, specifically the Community Development and Services Department (Staff), with respect to planning applications, building permit applications, and any other urban design related matters that Council and Staff may request the Committee's advice on. The Committee does not have the authority to approve or refuse applications or make policy decisions. The Committee is not intended to replace the role of Staff in the development approval process. Rather, the Committee provides an additional level of consultation to enhance the Town's development approval process.

1.2 The Committee also provides urban design advice on the potential physical and aesthetic impact of proposed buildings, structures, landscapes, parks and infrastructure projects to the community's public realm, including an evaluation of its relationship to the site and its surrounding character.

1.3 The Committee may be called upon to advise Staff directly, and Council via meeting minutes, on general matters related to urban design.

2.0 ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP

2.1 The Committee is established by Council in accordance with these Terms of Reference. All members are guided by this Terms of Reference.

2.2 The Committee will consist of one (1) member of Council, one (1) member of the Municipal Heritage Committee, and five (5) members, comprised of qualified individuals as described in Section 3.0.

2.3 A member shall cease to be a member if absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without prior authorization from the Manager of Planning. A new member to fill the vacated position will be subject to the selection and qualifications criteria, as per Section 3 of this Terms of Reference.

2.4 Working Groups

a) A working group (a sub-group of the Committee), may be created by the Committee to assist in the research or review of a given item and will provide a detailed written report back to the Committee.

b) A working group is normally comprised of Committee members however the maximum number of members in any one working group is restricted to be one member less than the minimum quorum of the Committee.

- c) Volunteers who are not Committee members may be called upon for their expertise to assist a working group by providing information.
- d) Working groups will operate by consensus; formal motions will not be required.
- e) Administrative support will generally not be available to working groups and consequently the preparation of any agendas, minutes and meeting requirements will be the responsibility of the working group. Support staff will not be required to attend working group meetings.

3.0 COMMITTEE SELECTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

3.1 Applications for Committee membership are requested at the beginning of the term of Council. Members will be appointed by resolution of Council for the duration of Council.

3.2 Preference will be given to individuals who are or have been members of the following professional associations in the last five years:

- a) Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) and/or Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC)
- b) Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA) and/or Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA)
- c) Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) and/or Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)
- d) Other equivalent Canadian or international professional organizations

3.3 Members shall have a demonstrated high level of expertise and knowledge in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, environmental management, urban and regional planning, and/or other related professions.

3.4 Members shall have a general knowledge of the composition, architecture, history and character of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara Region to enable them to make a positive contribution towards improving the Town's built environment and character.

3.5 Only one member of any particular firm or organization shall be permitted to be a member of the Committee at the same time.

3.6 Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake employees are not eligible to be members of the Committee.

4.0 SCOPE OF WORK

4.1 The Committee will primarily evaluate development applications, building permit applications, and major high-profile projects and provide professional advice and recommendations to Council and Staff on matters of design that affect the public realm, including the design of proposed buildings, structures, parks and open spaces, and

associated streetscapes, in order to promote and uphold standards of design excellence. The Committee may also provide input on policy and guidelines for specific sites and projects, as well as to define areas that should be resolved.

4.2 At the request of Council, the Committee will also provide input to the development of architectural design guidelines and other design standards as required.

5.0 MEETING SCHEDULE

5.1 The Committee is scheduled to meet the fourth Wednesday of every month. The meetings will start at 5 pm, virtually or in Council Chambers of the Town Municipal Office, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, ON. The annual schedule will be provided at the beginning of each year and meeting dates will be posted on the Town's website.

5.2 Established meeting dates and times will not be changed unless circumstances warrant special consideration.

5.3 Committee meetings are live-streamed and recorded, and made available for public viewing on the Town's website after the meeting date.

5.4 Generally, three (3) projects will be scheduled for each meeting date to allow sufficient time for members to evaluate the materials presented, as well as to discuss and formulate recommendations on each project. Additional projects, exceeding the maximum, may be permitted should circumstances warrant special consideration, as determined by the Staff liaison or as directed by Council.

6.0 PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

6.1 The required presentation materials shall be made known to the applicant at the earliest stage possible. The applicant shall submit the required materials to Town Staff three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date.

6.2 Complex projects will generally be considered by the Committee as follows:

- a) First review will be scheduled during the initial functional design of the project. This will afford the possibility of significant changes, if suggested by Staff and/or the Committee, prior to the submission of an application.
- b) Second review will be scheduled following revisions being made. This meeting is intended to contribute to the detailed design process of the project.

6.3 It is recognized that not all projects require two stages of review, as per this Terms of Reference. In such circumstances, the determination to undergo a single review will be recommended by the Staff liaison and reported to Council.

7.0 OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE

7.1 The meeting agenda and presentation packages for each Committee meeting will be sent electronically to members per the requirements of the Town's Procedural Bylaw. Members, upon receipt of the meeting agenda and presentation packages, shall notify the Staff liaison of their attendance to ensure quorum, as per Section 11 of this Terms of Reference.

7.2 Each project will be scheduled on the meeting agenda to allow an introduction by the Staff liaison, applicant presentation, questions and discussion by Committee members, and formulation of recommendations through the Chair.

7.3 For larger, more complex projects, Staff may allot additional time to the discussion. Should this arise, the meeting agenda will be adjusted to accommodate greater review time. This may occur at the expense of other projects being permitted to be on the meeting agenda, as determined by the Staff liaison.

7.4 Meetings are open to the public. In the case of a virtual meeting, the meeting will be livestreamed to allow the public to view the on the Town's website.

7.5 The Committee's comments will be based on Council-approved land use and urban design policies and Committee member's professional expertise and experience and best practices as advice to the applicant

7.6 The Committee will provide a list of recommendations to Staff through an approved motion. The Committee may, at its discretion, recommend to Staff that the application return to the Committee for further review.

7.7 Following the meeting, the Staff liaison will report the Committee's recommendations and inform Council of the appropriate actions to be taken by the applicant.

7.8 Near the end of each calendar year, the Committee and Staff will discuss the experiences and practices of Staff and the Committee to inform future Committee reviews and actions. The resulting year-end review report will be distributed to Council.

8.0 ROLES AND DUTIES

8.1 The Committee shall elect a Chair and a Vice Chair at the first meeting for the four-year period. The Chair and Vice Chair should preferably have a minimum of one (1) year of experience on an Urban Design Committee or other urban design advisory panel to be eligible. Members are eligible for re-election to Chair and Vice Chair positions.

8.2 The duties of the Chair shall be as follows:

- a) Chair all regular meetings of the Committee and exercises authority and performs duties as required;
- b) Ensure that decorum is maintained at each meeting and that the rules of procedure and conduct are observed in accordance with the Town's Procedural By-law;
- c) Ensure that all members are provided an opportunity to comment;
- d) Assure that all applicants are provided an opportunity to present and comment; and
- e) Provide guidance and leadership to the committee in the completion of its mandate.

8.3 The duties of the Vice Chair shall be as follows:

- a) Perform the role and responsibilities of the Chair in their absence.

8.4 The duties of all members, including the Chair and Vice Chair, shall be as follows:

- a) Attend all Committee meetings, and if a member is unable to attend, notify the Recording Secretary as soon as possible prior to the meeting;
- b) Review meeting agendas and presentation packages for all projects on the meeting agenda prior to the meeting, regardless of meeting attendance status;
- c) Contribute time, knowledge, skill and expertise to the fulfilment of the Committee's purpose, duties and scope of work;
- d) Be cognizant of and disclose any conflict of interest or perceived conflict in terms of issues that may service to benefit them personally, as per Section 12 of this Terms of Reference; and
- e) Act to protect the privacy of individuals with respect to personal information contained in reports and information circulated to them.

9.0 QUORUM

9.1 An attendance of a majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

9.2 If quorum is not attained, no actions or recommendations emanating from a meeting will have any force or effect. If quorum is determined to not be attained prior to a meeting, the meeting will be rescheduled. Members and applicants will be notified of the rescheduling.

10.0 SUPPORT STAFF

10.1 The Committee shall be assisted by the Staff liaison, who will provide background information, expert/technical advice and administrative support to the Committee.

10.2 Staff may also be in attendance to further provide background information and to allow for further understanding of the processing of development applications.

10.3 A Recording Secretary will attend in order to record the minutes of each Committee meeting.

11.0 REMUNERATION

11.1 Each member shall receive \$50 for each meeting attended. Payment is arranged biannually by the Corporate Services Department.

12.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

12.1 Members shall avoid conflicts of interest. Members shall take proactive steps to mitigate conflicts of interest in order to maintain public confidence in the Town and its elected officials. Members are encouraged to seek guidance from the Integrity Commissioner and/or legal advice when they become aware that they may have a conflict between their responsibilities to the public as a Member and any other interest.

12.2 All members have the duty to advise of any conflict of interest with respect to all matters before the committee. Members should decline to participate in the disposal of a matter where a real or apparent conflict is present.

12.3 All members, upon receipt of the meeting agenda, shall inform the Staff liaison of any conflicts of interest on the matters to be considered and declare the conflict at the meeting.

12.4 If a member has any conflict of interest on any matter and is present at a meeting at which the matter is the subject of consideration, the member:

- a) Should, prior to any consideration of the matter at the meeting, disclose the interest and the general nature thereof;
- b) Should not take part in the discussion of any question in respect of the matter; and
- c) Should not attempt in any way whether before, during or after the meeting to influence the discussion of the application.

13.0 REPORTING

13.1 Proceedings and minutes of the Committee will be reported to Council following each meeting in the subsequent Council Information Package.

14.0 ENABLING LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS TO BE REFERENCED

- a) By-law No. 5125-19 (Town's Procedural By-law)
- b) Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan
- c) Any other relevant documents pertaining to urban design in Niagara-on-the-Lake