

REPORT

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: January 8, 2024

From: Lisa Spitale,
Chief Administrative Officer
File: 05.1035.10

Item #: 2024-12

Subject: Member Selection for the Community Advisory Assembly

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report for information.

PURPOSE

To release the Closed resolutions appointing 36 members to the new Community Advisory Assembly pilot for a one-year term ending January 31, 2025, and share information with the community about the Assembly selection process and demographic profile.

BACKGROUND

At the Closed meetings on November 20, 2023 and December 4, 2023, New Westminster City Council approved the appointment of selected applicants for the new Community Advisory Assembly and directed staff to invite selected applicants and confirm their participation. Council also directed that the appointments to the Assembly be released to the public. This information report provides Council with details about the final steps for completion of the appointment process and Assembly set-up.

DISCUSSION

On August 28, 2023, Council endorsed the draft Terms of Reference and next steps for the Community Advisory Assembly. The Terms of Reference specify the group “will have a maximum of 36 members who are all current residents of New Westminster.

Membership of the Community Advisory Assembly will mirror the overall demographic profile of the city, based on the following characteristics:

- Geographic area of the city (i.e. neighbourhood)
- Gender identity
- Age group
- Housing tenure (i.e. renter or owner)
- Visible minority
- Indigenous identity

In addition to these characteristics, a diversity of lived experiences will be sought across Assembly members, such as including newcomers to Canada, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, etc.

The aim is for the Assembly members to include a wide diversity of lived experiences, and truly represent the New Westminster community.”

The application and selection process for the Assembly followed these guidelines in the draft Terms of Reference and applicants were selected with names and identifying information masked, or removed, based on their demographic characteristics.

Application Period and Recruitment

The application period for the Community Advisory Assembly opened on September 25, 2023. Applications were primarily accepted online, with paper copies available by request. The opportunity was promoted through a wide variety of City channels and communications methods, including social media, City email newsletters, local newspaper newsletters, a media release, posters, and direct email outreach to a wide variety of community organizations and contacts. Staff also attended a student wellness fair at New Westminster Secondary School and spoke directly with local youth about the new group.

The main application period closed on October 31, 2023 with more than 200 applications received. However, the number of applications from residents ages 19 and under was low and the application period was extended for this age group only. With several additional applications received from residents in this age group, the application period closed for all applicants on November 14, 2023.

A total of 216 applications were received specifically for the Community Advisory Assembly.

Member Selection Process

Staff from the Legislative Services team compiled a spreadsheet of all applicant information, assigned a unique number to each applicant, and then removed all identifying information such as names and email addresses. The de-identified data was

then shared with staff in Public Engagement and the Senior Planning Analyst from the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department, who is a statistician and data analysis expert.

In response to a question from Council at the August 28, 2023 meeting, staff told Council that a consultant who has been supporting the City with establishing the new Community Advisory Assembly might be involved in supporting the selection process. Staff would like to clarify that the member selection was conducted solely by City staff and no consultants or other external individuals were involved.

Staff applied a variety of filters in Excel to first identify the demographic groups where there were the fewest number of applicants, such as age 19 and under, non-binary/gender diverse, Indigenous, and experiencing homelessness/precariously housed. Given the relatively low number of applicants with these characteristics, these members were selected first. Then staff selected applicants who had a number of typically under-represented characteristics, such as renters, visible minorities, low-income, and experiencing disabilities.

The group was then rounded out with selections based on age group, geographic area of the city, and gender identity in order to meet the overall community profile, as per the 2021 Census, as closely as possible.

Member selection was also based on a principle of “no lone voices,” meaning that a minimum of two members were selected with specific demographic characteristics even if that resulted in a greater representation than the Census. This principle was applied to Indigenous residents, non-binary/gender diverse, and those experiencing homelessness.

It is important to note that where trade-offs were required, staff chose to select applicants from historically under-represented groups. Because each individual applicant comes with a unique set of demographic characteristics, exact representation was not possible with this pool of applicants. In assessing representativeness of public engagement participation in the City’s online engagement efforts, staff have considered “representative” to be within +/- 5% of Census representation, and the overall demographic profile of the Assembly meets this threshold.

Following the masked selection process (names removed), the unique number of each selected applicant was provided back to Legislative Services staff who identified the names of those selected.

Names of Appointed Assembly Members

Selected and confirmed Assembly members are listed in alphabetical order by surname.

- Iyad Al Khatib
- Juno Avila-Clark
- Sully Baird
- Sergio Barbon
- Mandy Chan
- Shelley Comer
- Diana Cruz
- Raj Dhaliwal
- Jadya Gibson
- Heidi Hizsa
- Michele Kelly
- Melody Kruppa
- Rahul Kumar
- Anne Ladouceur
- Leo Li
- Marlene Mydske
- Maria Nguyen
- Cornel Peana
- Nahla Peart
- Bob Petrusa
- Nyomi Ross
- Stuart Rushworth
- Erika Sanabria Medina
- Richard Schabler
- Cora Schellenberg
- Dave Seaweed
- Romy Senghera
- Paul Toth
- Jordan Van Brakel
- Kumar Varma
- Taz Visram
- Margaret Wanyoike
- Declan Williams
- Erica Wong
- Keysa Yanez Leon
- Titus Yip

Demographic Profile of Assembly

Demographic Measure	2021 Census Profile for City of New Westminster	Community Advisory Assembly Membership
Geographic Area of the City		
West End	10.7%	8.3%
Uptown	34.8%	36.1%
East End	21.3%	22.2%
Downtown	19.3%	16.7%
Queensborough	13.9%	16.7%
Gender Identity		
Man	49.3%	44.4%
Woman	50.7%	44.4%
Non-Binary/Gender Diverse/Other	0.44% (province wide)	11.1%
Age Group		
19 and under	16.4%	19.4%
20-34	23.9%	22.2%
35-49	22.9%	25.0%
50-64	20.8%	16.7%
65 and older	16.1%	16.7%
Housing Tenure		

Owner	54.7%	47.2%
Renter	45.3%	47.2%
Other (unhoused; living temporarily with family/friends)	~0.8%	5.6%
Visible Minority		
Visible Minority	46.8%	47.2%
Indigenous Identity		
Indigenous Identity	3.1%	5.6%

The Assembly membership also includes substantive representation of recent immigrants, immigrants who arrived in Canada five or more years ago, low-income residents, people living with disabilities, and single parents. Selected members also represent a diversity of racial identities.

NEXT STEPS

All 36 appointed members listed above have confirmed their participation on the Community Advisory Assembly, and the group will gather for the first time on January 11, 2024 for a Welcome Dinner with Council. The first working meeting of the Assembly has also been scheduled for January 25, 2024.

Council and the community will receive regular updates about the Assembly process and work as the term gets underway.

Staff have also notified applicants who were not selected for the Assembly.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Staff from Legislative Services, Public Engagement, and Climate Action, Planning and Development have been involved in the selection process for the Community Advisory Assembly.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council’s consideration:

1. That Council receive this report for information;
2. That Council provide alternative direction to staff.

Staff recommends Option 1.

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Jennifer Miller, Manager of Public Engagement

This report was reviewed by:
Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst
Peter DeJong, Corporate Officer

This report was approved by:
Lisa Leblanc, Acting Chief Administrative Officer